SANDWELL
CHRONICLE

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TRULY JULIE

Variety of roles put actress at the top

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STALEMATE

Tigers fail to roar as Albion get a point

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SCHOOL LOOKS TO DOUBLE ITS PUPILS

A PRIMARY school in Oldbury is looking to double in size under plans to rebuild it, in a bid to create hundreds of new pupil places.

St Hubert's Catholic Primary will close its current site in Wolverhampton Road and move a mile to new premises off Moat Road if the proposal is approved.

by Charlie Benton

The school currently caters for 210 pupils, but the new site would be for up to 420 children.

A spokesperson for the school said: "Children at the new school will have a new building designed to meet the needs of the curriculum and have lots of the facilities we currently cannot offer, such as more group rooms, the opportunity to work with children in the parallel year group, more library and play space and a bright, light and comfortable environment."

Reality

The school will also change its name from St Hubert's to Our Lady and St Hubert's Catholic Primary following a vote by parents.

St Hubert's is currently over-subscribed – the move will increase available class size to 60.

The work is expected to begin at Easter next year with a planned completion date of Easter 2016. Pupils will be moved into the new premises in September.

According to the school its Catholic ethos will remain paramount.

The spokesperson said: "The governors of the school ensure that all leaders and staff appointed have the skills and personal qualities needed to bring this to reality.

"The headteacher and deputy of a Catholic school have to be practising Catholics.

"All stakeholders in the school are 100 per cent committed to upholding the Catholic ethos and to sustaining the other characteristics of the school which have led to its outstanding provision and reputation.

"We will continue to work hard to overcome some of the challenges which will surely come also from being an expanded school, further from the church building and with a more varied intake of pupils."

The school was originally founded in 1937 and has existed in its original building since. The spokesperson said: "The advantages far outweigh the disadvantages regarding the opportunity for more pupils to have a catholic education.

"We will seize and embrace this opportunity to build on the strong foundations of the past to create a new school building with Christ at the heart of it, benefitting future Catholic and local children within Oldbury in the years to come."

A separate academy for secondary aged pupils will also open on the far end of the Moat Road site where the former Oldbury Grammar Langley High buildings sit.

Youngsters' work pops up in gallery

From left, Alicia Price, Oliver Beasley and Joshua Chambers Priest with their Viking ship which is on show

PUPILS at a Tividale school have seen their class work exhibited in a pop-up art gallery.

The exhibition by children at Grace Mary Primary School was officially opened by Mayor Derek Rowley.

At the start of term, each class were given a historical time period to learn about and were asked to produce pieces of work based on those periods to display in the gallery.

The historical topics included the Second World War, Vikings, ancient civilisation, ancient Greece and Florence Nightingale.

Deputy Head and year five teacher, Mr Cains, said: "It was a really great community celebration. This is a new event for us as we introduced new curriculum to the school this year."

Each pupil submitted their work to the exhibition, which included drawings, paintings, 3D models and re-creations of artefacts that the pupils had learned about in their studies. Some year five pupils spent two days over at Ormiston Forge Academy with their design and technology teachers building a wooden boat based on those the Vikings sailed around the world in. Mr Cains, added: "It has been really fantastic for the pupils.

"When we told them about the exhibition we said that only their best pieces of work would be going into the display," he added.

"They were really excited about learning their subject and creating their work so that people could see it in the display. The staff have been really competitive as well and each class has been wanting to create the best pieces of work.

"It really has been great fun for us," he added. As well as creating artwork, learning each subject has given the pupils the chance to try their hand at story writing.

Wizzard musician funeral date set

Mike Burney, who was 75

THE funeral of a saxophonist who played with 70s rockers Wizzard will take place next Thursday.

Mike Burney, the 75-year-old who played on their classic massive Christmas hit I Wish It could be Christmas Everyday died last month after battling cancer. The service will be held at Sandwell Valley Crematorium, Newton Road, on December 18 from 2.15pm. It will be followed by a wake at The Wheatsheaf in Birmingham Road, Walsall.

Mr Burney, of The Butts, Walsall, had met and performed with a range of music legends – including Sammy Davis Jr, Petula Clark, Steve Winwood, Dionne Warwick, Billy Eckstine, Mel Torme, Cliff Richard and even Bob Hope.

But he is best known for his membership of 70s glam pop group Wizzard, led by Brum rock star Roy Wood.

Nursery in three awards

A NURSERY in Sandwell has completed a hat-trick of awards this year, despite only opening last year.

The Guru Nanak Guardwara Nursery, based in Trinity Street in Smethwick, has been awarded an 'outstanding' Ofsted report following an inspection.

It comes after the nursery was given a business development award from Nursery World in September, and a day nursery award in the Sandwell borough last month. The nursery was opened in August last year.

Burglars make off with cash in coffers

BURGLARS have struck at a church in the Black Country, smashing its sound system before fleeing with copper coins from a donation bowl.

Church leaders have hit out at those responsible, saying the damage has come at the busiest time of year. St Bartholomew's Church in Church Hill, Wednesbury, was hit last Wednesday.

Thieves broke in and made off with a CD player and coins from the donations bowl.

But before leaving they also smashed up the church's amplifier and mixing desk.

Just weeks earlier the church hall suffered a break-in.

Rev Tim Vasby-Burnie said the damage caused in the latest incident has come at one of the worst possible times of year.

"With all the Christmas services coming up it is a real hassle for us to be fixing the sound system at a time when we are trying to get people in and bring people together.

"We had two funerals the following day, one with over 100 people. It was very awkward to have no working sound system.

"The system was still broken for our Sunday service so those with hearing loops were unable to use them."

Store protest signatures

AROUND 250 people in just seven days have signed a petition against plans to build a convenience store on the car park of a landmark Cradley Heath pub.

Up to 20 jobs could be created by the business, which would be built near the Haden Cross in Halesowen Road. But the scheme has sparked opposition from people living nearby.

Around 80 people turned out to a public meeting on Monday night and the petition was launched.

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Death of pioneer journalist, aged 83

John Beck

A FORMER Dudley Grammar School boy who went on to be one of the founding pioneers of the Shropshire Star, John Beck, has died at the age of 83.

Mr Beck , of Condover, near Shrewsbury, retired in 1991 after a journalistic career of nearly 33 years with the Midland News Association, during which he worked on several different titles including the Chronicle. John married Jean Mary Beck in 1959. He had had a stroke last year and went to the Vicarage Care Home in Bayston Hill and died there.

The funeral is at noon next Friday at Emstrey Crematorium, Shrewsbury.

Born in Park Lane, Tipton, John Cyril Beck went to Dudley Grammar School in 1942 and in September 1947 began working at the Herald Press in the town in the proof reading room.

After nine months an urgent plea to editor Norman Braithwaite coincided with a vacancy in the Brierley Hill office of the County Advertiser.

In September 1951 he journeyed to RAF Padgate for two years' National Service. Afterwards he wrote for the Express & Star in the Stafford office where he took over coverage of theatre productions. Later he worked in Bilston before becoming deputy editor of the Wolverhampton Chronicle.He and his wife moved to Condover when he joined the team led by first editor Ted Ireland to launch the Shropshire Star in 1964, where he was features editor.

Apartments set to be built at historic site

THE RED House in Great Barr will be transformed into new homes under plans unveiled. The historic mansion house has long been targeted by thieves and vandals.

Originally built in 1841 for Walsall MP Robert Scott, it has been derelict for 10 years. However, GR8 Space Ltd has unveiled plans to convert the building into eight two-bedroom apartments.

While keeping the home's historical features, the Worcester-based firm also wants to build a terrace of six three-bedroom houses at the site. The Red House has been at the centre of a long-running dispute over its future after repeatedly being targeted by vandals.

Five years ago, it was estimated it would cost £1.7 million to bring the building back into use for the community and developers have been eyeing it up for housing ever since.

Great Barr councillor Sadie Smith said: "We have had several attempts over the years to bring the building back into use, but it has been difficult for all sorts of reasons, including costs and not being taken seriously enough. We are now in a situation where residential is the only use being put forward for it. I'm concerned what impact this could have on the park access."

The new plan by GR8 Space has now been submitted to Sandwell Council for approval. The document reads: "These alterations have been considered carefully and kept to a minimum to achieve satisfactory layouts."

Areas to remain unchanged include the roof, main entrance, staircases and halls and landings. The terraced houses would be close to the house, fronting on to Hill Lane, each with a small garden area. The Red House is owned by Sandwell Council and stands on a 27-acre estate.

School is shut after smoke fear

A SCHOOL in the shadow of Smethwick's fire-ravaged Wattville Road industrial estate has been forced to close for a second time as smoke continues to billow from smouldering rubble.

Staff at Wattville Primary School decided to shut on Tuesday because of concerns about potentially dangerous smoke and fumes coming from the devastated industrial units. It was also closed Wednesday.

There are still small pockets of fire inaccessible to firefighters due to the collapsed buildings but crews are continuing to visit the site following last Wednesday's blaze.

The school said it would closed while checks were carried out to ensure the air around the school did not pose a threat to pupils. It comes after it was forced to close on the day of the fire.

Headteacher of 13 years Joanne Roach said: "The fire is still not properly out. The rubble is still smouldering and there is a lot of smoke and fumes.

"The wind has changed direction and is now carrying the smoke and fumes directly across the school grounds.

"Now there is an awful smell to that."

Empty shells in wake of fire

The true devastation is really visible from the air – @WestMidsFire pic.twitter.com

IT used to be busy and bustling, but has been reduced to nothing more than an empty shell – this remarkable image shows the extent of the damage caused by the blaze at Smethwick's Wattville Road industrial estate.

It is a scene of complete destruction and one that is heart-breaking for the people whose businesses went up in flames.

TV Trade Warehouse manager Kulwinder Hayre lost his company's warehouse.

"It is absolutely devastating," he said. "I got the call at around 3.30 on the morning it went up and the fire brigade were already there when I got there. Once it had gone up there was no stopping it."

Mr Hayre said the premises served as the wholesale side of his company. "We still have the retail store but all of our stock was there and now it is gone. I'd say all in all it has cost us £250,000 if you factor in all the stock and premises, as well as the loss of earnings." More than 75 firefighters tackled the fire, which broke out at around 3am on Wednesday.

It is believed six units were wrecked in total containing clothes, electrical goods, and stationery supplies. No one was hurt.

Firefighters battled the flames and managed to bring the blaze under control within a few hours. However, the site had to be damped down for several days afterwards as areas continued to smoulder and pockets of flames were found in sheltered spots.

Tipton's Christmas tree hit by vandals

VANDALS have wrecked a Christmas tree in a Black Country town – smashing bulbs and burning electric cables.

A councillor has condemned those responsible after the damaged tree in Princes End, Tipton, was discovered.

Councillor Steve Jones, who originally campaigned to have a Christmas tree put up to improve the area, said he was disappointed by the actions of the people who vandalised the tree.

"There is this real atmosphere recently of anti-social behaviour," Councillor Jones said. "I do not know what is causing it but it has spiked very suddenly.

"For the last few years anti-social behaviour has been down and the police have been doing a fantastic job, but recently it has flared up again."

Emergency repairs were carried out on the tree but the electric cables will need to be replaced next week.

Councillor Jones said although police patrols have been stepped up he is calling on them to do more.

According to Councillor Jones, the vandalism of the Christmas tree is the tip of the iceberg, and just the latest incident in a spate of anti-social behaviour.

Reminder over offer

A REMINDER has gone out that a holiday is on offer from the Rotary Clubs of Sandwell. The Merton House Hotel in Ross on Wye caters for disabled, elderly and frail people.

Transport is included in the £310 price, with places available starting April 11 and 18. Applications have to be made before January 31.

Send a stamped addressed envelope, and details including name address and telephone number to Merton House Holiday Offer, c/o Bill Elliot, Orchard School, Causeway Green Road, Oldbury, B68 8LD.

Extravaganza

ALL are welcome at Great Bridge's Christmas Extravaganza tomorrow. The event in Market Place runs from 5pm to 9pm and the Mayor will be switching on the lights at around 6.30pm. Entertainment includes fun fair rides. For more information, call 07973 550631.

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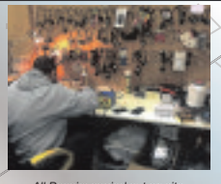
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Dog mess owner has to pay up £150 bill

A WEST Bromwich man has landed a £150 court bill after failing to pick up dog mess. It is the latest court prosecution in Sandwell Council's 'zero tolerance' dog fouling crackdown.

And it follows news that wardens have fined more than 60 people since a hard-hitting dog fouling poster campaign launched in February.

Jamie Cannell, aged 33, of Crankhall Lane, West Bromwich, admitted failing to clean up after a dog he was in charge of at Charlemont playing fields on 11 July 2014. He was spotted by a council warden – but would not accept a fixed penalty notice, so the council took him to court. On Tuesday, Black Country Magistrates Court fined him £36.66 and ordered him to pay £100 in court costs and a £20 victim's surcharge, making a total of £156.66 to pay within 14 days.

Environment chief Councillor Maria Crompton, said: "Dog fouling is disgusting, looks horrible, is a serious health hazard and costs taxpayers money to clean up. We refuse to put up with it any longer and hope this sends out a firm message."

For more information visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/dogfouling

Asian festival best in UK

THE Sandwell and Birmingham Mela festival, which takes place annually in Victoria Park, Smethwick, has been named the best of its kind at the UK Bhangra Awards in London.

The two-day Mela, which is the biggest in the UK, celebrates South Asian Culture and attracts upwards of 125,000 people. Sandwell & Birmingham Mela was founded in 2011 and is run by a volunteer organisation and supported by the Arts Council England.

Punjabi actor and singer Gippy Grewal was one of this year's star attractions

Hotel to open

A £9.5MILLION hotel and restaurant development in Stourbridge will open on Monday. More than 70 jobs have been created at the 80-bed Premier Inn and Brewers Fayre pub restaurant in Birmingham Street. Work began on the scheme in April this year.

Vision for new £7m leisure centre revealed

Artist impression of the new centre

THIS is the new vision for a £7million leisure centre and sports hall in Wednesbury.

It is the first artist impression to be released since plans had to be revised following a fire at the site in July.

The new complex is being built on the site of the old centre but the project was set back after blaze broke out damaging the former sports hall which was due to be kept.

Architects went back to the drawing board to design a new centre and sports hall with work getting under way in October. The centre is starting to take shape with the foundation already in place.

The plans for the brand new sports hall were drawn up by Sandwell Council in partnership with in-house architectural and engineering designers and the additions to the plans were approved in September.

Paul Slater, the chief Executive of Sandwell Leisure Trust said: "We are very much looking forward to the opening of the new centre which will provide residents with swimming, fitness and sports facilities."

The fire in July put a halt to work on the original project, being built by local construction company Interserve, in which the original sports hall was to be preserved. The site had only just been cleared and prepared before the blaze struck, and Interserve had started laying foundations weeks before. The centre will be the fourth new leisure facility to open in the borough in the last two years, with the new £12.5m West Bromwich Leisure Centre having opened in Moor Street on June 2.

The £8m Tipton Leisure Centre, which now has more than 7,500 members, opened in April last year, while Portway Lifestyle Centre in Oldbury, which cost £18m, was also opened last year.

Lodged bean caused death of infant in tragic accident

AN 18-month-old boy died six days after a black-eyed bean become lodged in his right lung, an inquest heard.

Aviraj Singh Gill was at home in Emily Street, West Bromwich, when he swallowed several uncooked beans. After becoming unwell he was seen by healthcare professionals five times before his death on September 11. Several diagnoses were given.

However, none of them identified the bean which caused pneumonia in the right lung.

At the inquest at Smethwick Council House on Monday, coroner Zafar Siddique reached a conclusion of accidental death. It was while being looked after by his father, Sukhwinder Singh Gill, that Aviraj opened a kitchen cupboard and knocked a container of beans onto the floor.

His parents knew he had swallowed some but with no evidence of choking were unaware one had entered his lung. He quickly became unwell and in the next five days was twice taken to walk-in centres, twice to a GP surgery and to A&E at Sandwell Hospital.

The family were prescribed pain relief and antibiotics. The inquest heard the day before he died, Aviraj had briefly stopped breathing but recovered after being hit on his back by his father. Dr Ali Akbar, a consultant paediatrician at Sandwell Hospital, said the uncooked bean could have swelled once in the lung, making the obstruction worse. He added with the amount of contact with medical professionals, there had been 'missed opportunities'.

Mr Siddique said had there been evidence of choking it may have resulted in further investigation.

Results of Safer 6 are outlined

THE results from an anti-social behaviour and crime crackdown in Smethwick have been revealed.

Sandwell Council's Safer 6 wardens seized alcohol twice in High Street and tobacco twice from underage smokers in Thimblemill Road and West Park Road. They also issued a dog fouling fine at West Smethwick Park and dealt with four abandoned vehicles.

Wardens tackled three people who were smoking cannabis behind shops in Bearwood High Street and illegal fishing at West Smethwick Park, and reported fly-tipping at several places to be cleaned up.

Trading standards officers visited seven off licences across Smethwick to check alcohol sales – none sold to the underage volunteer. They also visited 30 money transfer outlets, and gave advice on scams.

Councillor Linda Horton, Smethwick town lead member for Sandwell Council, said: "We work closely together all year around to make Smethwick a safer, cleaner place."

Baggies stars bring some festive cheer

Baggies players seen during their visit to Sandwell General Hospital, from left, Jason Davidson, Victor Anichebe, Cristian Gamboa, Sébastien Pocognoli and Luke Daniels with young patient Daniel Waldron and nurses

WEST Bromwich Albion players brought festive cheer to the children's ward at Sandwell General Hospital.

Five members of the first-team squad personally delivered a variety of presents for the young patients.

They were goalkeeper Luke Daniels, defenders Cristian Gamboa, Sébastien Pocognoli and Jason Davidson, and striker Victor Anichebe.

The players were joined by Father Christmas, who helped bring smiles to the faces of the poorly youngsters.

As well as the toys given out to the children, the players also presented two Playstation 4 consoles and a signed shirt to the ward. The shirt will be raffled off to raise cash for the hospital.

It was a first visit to the hospital for Belgian international full back Pocognoli, who joined the club in the summer. He said: "The other players told me how they genuinely look forward to this – and I understand why.

"It is always good to see the smiles you can bring to the children's faces."

Last year, seven of the club's first team players walked through the doors of the ward to hand out gifts.

They were joined by West Bromwich Albion's two mascots, Baggie Bird and Albi, who joined the players in getting photographs with the excited youngsters and their families.

A group was also sent to Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley and to Birmingham Children's Hospital on Tuesday.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Third Brum date for Mac next year

A THIRD date in Birmingham has been added to rock legends Fleetwood Mac's UK tour in the new year due to phenomenal public demand.

The band had previously announced concerts as part of the On With the Show tour at the Genting Arena – the former LG Arena – at the National Exhibition Centre on June 8 and 9.

Fleetwood Mac, who have recently welcomed back Bearwood-born singer Christine McVie to the line-up, will now also play at the venue on July 4. Christine McVie rejoined after a 16-year absence.

Motorists' speeds clocked by council

THE speed of motorists along a mile-long road in Smethwick is being monitored after residents made calls for measures to slow down traffic.

Residents on Norman Road have sent a petition to Sandwell Council for a traffic calming scheme.

They also want a pedestrian crossing.

In response, the council has been conducting the speed checks on motorists. If it is found to be a problem, the issue will be passed onto police.

Bond composer in city concert

FILM composer David Arnold, who has written the scores for five James Bond films, is to perform with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra next year.

He will be appearing with the CBSO in Symphony Hall on June 26.

The 52-year-old musician has also created music for the BBC television series Sherlock and the movie Independence Day.

Peak district trip for mountaineers

WEST Bromwich Mountaineering Club will visit Hayfield in the peak district this Sunday. Coaches leave Edward Street car park at 7am and also pick up at Penkridge at 7.20 am.

Cost is £22.00 for non members. Those from West Bromwich may be eligible for a free trip. Call Nigel Tarr on 07724 316311.

Gripes on bikers

POLICE patrols have been stepped up after complaints about off-road bikers around Shelfield and Rushall. Concerns have been raised about the area at the fields of Fordbrook Lane and Pelsall Lane.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

THE tree fellers took down an old oak at the end of the road and invited us to help ourselves. So for the first time in years we hauled home ye old yule log and placed it by the front door as a sign of welcome. Snag is, people keep tripping over it, so it's not so much a yule log as a yule catch your foot on that log.

I HAVE decided to call our yule log The Miliband after Weird Ed was this week denounced by an unnamed posse of Labour malcontents. They claim he is "a liability on the doorstep."

I ADMIT our yule log cannot compete with the festive suggestion from BBC Gardener's World magazine - a wreath made of sprouts. I suggest you hang it on your door to greet visitors with the motto: "Look what the wind blew in."

MEANWHILE, from A Christmas Carol, published in 1843, Ebenezer Scrooge offers his thoughts on the Chancellor's 2014 autumn statement: "What's Christmas time for you but a time for paying bills without money?"

TWO of my neighbours with grandchildren have seen the new Paddington film and both report a) it is far too good for kids and b) when the film ended everyone applauded.

A READER reports the following: 1) cost of replacing broken zip in daughter's school skirt, £14. Cost of two new identical school skirts at local supermarket, £8. Thanks to globalisation, the old motto "make do and mend" has become make do and spend. It no longer makes sense to repair anything.

LORD Harries of Pentregarth, a senior bishop in the Church of England, says Prince Charles's coronation service should have a reading from the Koran. It seems likely that invitations will be sent to Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist and Jewish leaders. But hell, why stop there? Let's have a coronation that fully reflects the diverse beliefs of this great nation. I want Shakers, Quakers, Scientologists and druids. I want a flypast by elves and fairies, synchronised yoga by leprechauns and military drill by serried ranks of Jedi knights. I want witches and pagans and a special Coronation promise by the tooth fairy, a recitation by Prince Charles' talking shrubs, a sermon for atheists by Richards Dawkins and a reading by Psychic Sally ("I'm getting someone called Victoria, your majesty. She says she's very proud of you"). I suspect Charles' reign will be a batty sort of affair so let's start as he means to go on.

APPARENTLY we haven't quite got Black Friday right. We Brits love to mimic the Yanks and we have managed to do the whooping, cheering, door ramming and fist-fighting for cut-price goods. But a reader who knows the States tells me in American cities it is traditional to carry your cut-price goods as far as your car where they are taken off you by armed gangs. Maybe we'll do that next year, eh? One reader finds nothing at all amusing in Black Friday. "If there was a food shortage now," she says, "there would be no orderly queues as during the Second World War, just anarchy."

"NOW regions demand the same powers as Scotland," trumpeted one headline this week on the alleged enthusiasm for devolved power in England. I don't know a single normal person who cares tuppence about it. On closer inspection, the "regions" demanding greater powers (according to the headline) turn out to be not normal people but council leaders. No surprises there. The eagerness of bigwigs to become even biggerwigs knows no bounds.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Hundreds receive station parking fines

HUNDREDS of fines have been handed out to drivers who parked badly at railway stations in Sandwell and Dudley.

During eight weeks, 205 fines of £100 were dished out at Sandwell and Dudley, 199 at Rowley Regis and 135 at Stourbridge Junction. The fines are reduced to £60 if paid within 14 days. Centro decided to take action after complaints about cars obstructing other motorists and forcing pedestrians to walk in the road at stations. Bosses say the scheme is proving successful as the number of fines given out is falling each week.

Councillor Roger Horton, lead member for rail and Midland Metro for Centro, said: "Although tickets are still being issued, and despite a small rise in weeks six and seven of the scheme, the overall steady reduction in numbers shows the message is getting through.

"We are glad the campaign is having the desired effect and making people think about parking more considerately."

Stephen Rhodes, Centro director of operations, said Stourbridge, Rowley Regis and Sandwell and Dudley seeing the highest numbers reflected that they are some of the busiest stations on the network. He said demand for parking was being addressed by car park expansion work at these stations. Work is underway to add 360 spaces to the existing 382 at Rowley Regis.

A redesign is also due to take place at Sandwell and Dudley station next year which would add to the current 374 spaces.

Police's grim discovery of body in wheelie bin

Romanian-born Lidia Pascale, aged 26

Police cordon off Hope Street, where the wheelie bin with the body inside was discovered

FAMILIES have spoken of their horror after the body believed to missing Lidia Pascale was found in a wheelie bin left outside a row of terraced houses.

Report by Alex Ross

Police made the grim discovery in Hope Street, West Bromwich, more than two weeks after the 26-year-old disappeared.

She was last seen in High Street in West Bromwich and detectives launched a murder investigation a week later. A house on High Street has been cordoned off since Friday, and three vehicles have been seized as police look for evidence.

Police found a body in a black wheelie bin in Hope Street, only 100 metres from the cordoned off home.

The body was yet to be officially identified.

Neighbours Eugene Roberts, aged 90, and Andrew Stevenson, 46, live behind where the bin had been positioned. They say it appeared on November 20.

Mr Stevenson said: "We all saw it and asked each other who the bin belonged, but no-one knew where it had come from. It had no number on and it was just left out on the pavement.

"We didn't think much more of it until the police turned up.

"It's very disturbing to think a body was inside it, we were walking past it everyday without knowing." He added: "It's very sad what has happened, I've never known anything like this.

"You know there is crime everywhere, but you don't expect it on your doorstep."

A 30-year-old woman, who lived in Hope Street, but did not want to be named, said: "I've never seen so many police about anywhere. They are looking everywhere.

"It's sickening to hear a body was in the bin. I hope they catch those responsible for this."

Marcus O'Connor, 23, of High Street, said: "This is ridiculous. Why would someone have so little respect for life to put a body in a bin, no way."

Police closed Hope Street off on Friday afternoon to remove the bin, it reopened shortly before 3pm.

Officers continued interviewing residents and searching the area.

Matthew Cherrington, 32 and Thomas Ricketts, 37, have been charged with Lidia's murder and have been remanded whilst inquiries are ongoing.

Chief Superintendent Mark Payne said: "Following searches of the local area we can confirm that today we have found a body of a woman. An area of Hope Street has been cordoned off whilst forensic experts search the area.

"We are still in the early stages of identifying the woman."

Lidia moved to the UK from Romania a year ago. She lived at an address in Smethwick.

Project is backed by charity's £85,000

A PAIR of organisations working within the Black Country to support young adults who face additional barriers to employment have got a grant of more than £85,000 from Comic Relief to get a new project off the ground.

Housing and care organisation Midland Heart has been awarded the funding to launch a new project called Onside with long-term partners The Albion Foundation.

The funding will be used to employ a full-time intervention worker over the next two years to work with young people aged 14 and 15 to help them get better prepared for the work environment earlier. Midland Heart has been working with the Albion Foundation for more than two years and employs young people referred from the foundation on its Back on Track apprentice scheme.

"Back on Track is a great route to employment for those aged 16 and above but many are still not work ready. This funding is critical as it will add another layer to the work already being done by getting young people 'onside' from the age of 14,," said Gail Walters, head of community engagement at Midland Heart.

Mayor visits post workers

A MAYOR was given a tour of a Royal Mail delivery office to see how staff were gearing up for the festive season.

Mayor of Sandwell Councillor Derek Rowley visited the base in Oldbury to speak to postal workers.

He was shown around by delivery office manager Andrew Henson.

Councillor Rowley said: "It was great to meet postmen and women at Royal Mail's Oldbury Delivery Office and see first-hand just how much effort they put into delivering for people at this time of year."

Route closed

A MAIN cut-through route into Walsall town centre has re-opened for the busy Christmas period. North Street has been shut since October for rebuilding and raising the height of the rail bridge. The route is expected to remain open until January 5.

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Appeal on plight of people in refuges

AN appeal has been launched to help around 50 children and 44 women who will spend Christmas in a refuge away from their homes this year.

Sandwell Women's Aid together with the Mayor, Councillor Derek Rowley are asking for donations of presents to make Christmas better for victims of domestic abuse and violence.

Sandwell Women's Aid supports women and children who have escaped domestic abuse, sexual exploitation and international human trafficking.

The charity is urging people to donate gifts which they will distribute to Sandwell women and children who won't be spending this Christmas in their own homes.

The mayor has made Sandwell Women's Aid his charity and has joined the call for Christmas gift donations.

Gifts of food, toiletries, toys and books are needed or people are asked to hold a workplace collection, fundraising raffle or event to help boost funds.

Contact Kat Bailey, fundraising and engagement officer at SWA, on 0121 553 0090 or email kat@sandwellwomensaid.co.uk to donate gifts.

Cleaning firm award

RISING Stars Cleaning has won the social enterprise category at the 2014 Chartered Institute of Housing Midlands awards.

The cleaning company, which is based in Smethwick, received the award at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham after being nominated by affordable housing contractor Wates Living Space and Sandwell Council

The firm was established 15 months ago by entrepreneur La Toyah Lewis, and it has received a great deal of support from Wates Living Space.

Cafe on the

A DISCOUNT shop in Aldridge town centre will be turned into a cafe, bringing a number of new jobs. LCP Securities Ltd has been given the go-ahead by Walsall Council to turn 99p World at Anchor Parade, into a cafe and are now seeking a tenant.

School celebrates its 'outstanding' rating

Headteacher Heidi Faulkner with pupils

PUPILS in Tipton are celebrating after their school was rated outstanding by Ofsted. Ocker Hill Infant and Nursery School in Gospel Oak Road was given full marks by the education watchdog in an inspection.

In a report inspectors said: "As a result of outstanding provision in the early years foundation stage, children achieve exceptionally well in all areas of learning."

Headteacher Mrs Heidi Faulkner, said: "I am so proud of what we have achieved. Hopefully now we can maintain where we are and look at improving our curriculum even further." The report added: "Senior leaders have a significant and positive impact on improving the school. Standards at the end of year two are rising steadily and are now above those expected for the pupils' ages."

The inspection took place in October, with inspectors observing classes. They looked at pupils' work books and heard them reading aloud. They also held meetings with with governors, staff and pupils'.

The report also stated: "Adults have very high expectations of pupils' capability and provide constant challenge. In nursery and reception classes,teachers provide stimulating opportunities to learn through children exploring and investigating."

The school has also been highly praised for its teaching standards and are constantly pushing the pupils to do their absolute best to progress as rapidly as possible.

Mrs Faulkner added: "I have to thank all of the staff for their continuous hard work, this would not have happened if it had not have been for them, and our hard-working pupils of course. I am so immensely proud of the whole school community. The outstanding achievement of the pupils' is a result of excellent team work."

Crackdown on borough yobs results in 1,700 calls

MORE than 1,700 calls about anti-social behaviour in Sandwell have been logged this year, new figures reveal.

It comes as the council reveals plans to tackle hotspots across the borough. The greatest number of reported incidents have been in the Soho Victoria, West Bromwich Central and Princes End wards. Council officers have been working with police and the fire service on a six-week campaign aiming to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime.

This has included tackling drug dealing, disorder involving people living in neighbourhoods and threats of violence. But there has also been a clear-up of fly-tipping and moves to tackle rough sleepers, street drinking and rogue traders.

Officials say they have been targeting a well-known gang operating in part of the borough and took action to evict members from homes and issue anti-social behaviour orders.

In total there have been 1,774 record events of anti-social behaviour in 2014 compared to 1,770 in 2013.

Many wards have shown a reduction in the number of incidents – most noticeably in Tividale which has risen by 43, Oldbury which has had a rise of 31 and Newton which has had 15 more recorded acts than last year.

The report said: "The main hotspots for youth related anti-social behaviour are located around Friar Park, Princes End, Guns Village, Wednesbury and West Bromwich town centre and Wood Green."

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act replaces 19 former powers with six which are designed to be quicker and more flexible and designed to give victims a greater say in the way their reports are dealt with.

Haulage site homes on the way

MORE than 200 homes will be built on the site of a haulage firm's former base in Rowley Regis after planning permission was granted.

Sandwell Council has approved the scheme for the site in Doulton Road which has been home to French logistics firm Norbert Dentressangle.

A mixture of houses and apartments will be built.

It comes after bosses at the firm announced in August last year that they would be relocating its business to the East Midlands, with the loss of 140 jobs.

Workers were given the chance to transfer to the new site.

The plans are for 218 homes and a retail development has also been proposed as part of the project.

There would be a mixture of two to four bedroom houses and one to two bedroom apartments.

The firm said there was 'no reasonable prospect' of the site being used for employment purposes in the future.

Ageing Grace-fully to reach her 100th

Celebrating her 100th birthday, Grace Morgan, of Upper Gornal, Dudley, with her flowers and cards

NEVER touching alcohol or cigarettes and sticking to knitting and reading has been revealed as the secret to Grace Morgan's long life as she celebrates her 100th birthday.

The former sewing machinist was surrounded by family, friends and neighbours as she celebrated her big day at her home in Upper Gornal. She was born to her parents Mr and Mrs Dando on November 30, 1914 in Himley and lived on Dudley Road, with her other four younger siblings, Jack, Mary, George and Hilda.

Mrs Morgan attended the Park School, Grange Road, Dudley where after she left to work as a sewing machinist.

After meeting husband William at a fair in 1934, the couple were together for two years before they married on March 14, 1936. They lived a house owned by Mr Morgan's parents on Club Row, Upper Gornal and had two children, Robert and Michael.

Youngest son Michael, who she had at the age of 27, said: "She does remember things from the past, but the one thing she remembers very clearly is when her family received a telegram to say that her brother, Jack, had been killed in action at the age of 21. He was fighting during the Second World War."

Her husband died in 1968 when he was 56. He had worked as a miner at Baggeridge until it closed. Mrs Morgan has two grandchildren, Robert, 52 and Neil 48,two great-grandchildren, Daniel, 24 and Connie, three, and one great-great-grandchild Olivia, who is seven.

Grace, seen aged 19

NEWS IN BRIEF

Spellar in call for sight loss support

AN MP is backing a campaign to ensure that everyone diagnosed with sight loss gets emotional support to come to terms with their condition.

John Spellar, MP for Warley, is supporting RNIB, which is calling for every eye department in the UK to have access to a qualified sight loss adviser so that people are properly supported as they adapt to sight problems. Adults in the UK are more afraid of losing their sight than developing Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, heart disease or having to use a wheelchair.

Mr Spellar said: "I think that it is vital that blind and partially sighted people receive quality and timely support."

Eggfree cake shop opens its premises

FRANCHISE business The Eggfree Cake Box has taken a 10-year lease on a prominent High Street shop in Smethwick.

The new branch in Bearwood Road brings it to around 40 outlets across the country.

The ground floor 760 sq ft shop makes a wide variety of cakes without using eggs

Launched in 2008, and with a headquarters in Romford, Essex, its other West Midlands branches include Walsall and Wolverhampton. Bond Wolfe managing partner James Mattin said: "Local demand for retail space is outweighing supply.

Symphony Hall concert by Elvis

SINGER-SONGWRITER Elvis Costello is to perform solo in Birmingham on his next UK tour.

The Detour dates in the spring and summer will include a show at Symphony Hall on May 31.

Tickets for the 21 concerts go on sale on Friday, December 5.

He will be perform a collection of classics spanning his three-decade career, covering everything from his punk roots to country.

Advice centre in charity funds bid

AN advice centre helping European citizens coming to West Bromwich has marked its 11th anniversary by helping collect hundreds of pounds for charity.

Global Centre, an advisory and translation centre, raised £832.56 for Birmingham Children's Hospital. Chief Beata Stojek said there was a similar collection last year.

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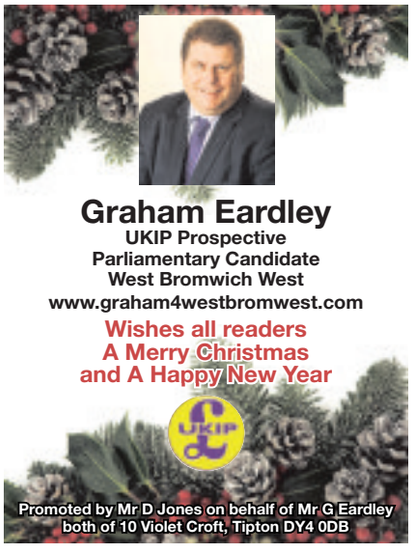
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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews

THE Archbishop of Canterbury has come under fire for dabbling in politics regarding his comments about food banks in the UK. An MP warned the Most Rev Justin Welby that he ran the risk of becoming a pawn in a political game. I would perhaps be sympathetic to the MP's point, were the MP in question anyone other than David Mellor.

To be fair, as far as we know, he did resist from calling the Archbishop a "sweaty, stupid little s***", so clearly the man is learning. But I still do not think he is the man to be lecturing the Archbishop about matters of religion.

❒❒❒❒❒

MEANWHILE, the Archbishop has also suggested we should do our Christmas shopping at charity shops. No doubt, most men will be nodding sagely in agreement, thinking this is an excellent piece of advice. Their wives may need a little more convincing.

❒❒❒❒❒

OH, and if you didn't know Foggy is this year's winner of I'm A Celebrity. It's not the bloke off Last of the Summer Wine. No idea who he is, mind.

❒❒❒❒❒

A Christmas card which listed '10 reasons by Santa Claus must live on a council estate' has been withdrawn from sale by Clinton Cards after sparking a storm of protests.

The reasons listed included "He has a serial record for breaking and entering", and "He only works once a year".

One indignant complainant labelled the card "seriously vile",another said it was "beyond offensive" while a third said it was "vilifying and stigmatising the poor for corporate gain".

Oh, do get over yourselves, please. Of course such stereotyping is unfair, and the card probably is in bad taste, but if we start directing so much anger at every dubious joke, what is left for the really serious stuff?

What are we going to ban next? Irish jokes? Mother-in-law gags? Benny out of Crossroads?

Let's face it, Black Country humour is based almost entirely on unfair and outdated stereotypes about flat-capped simpletons with funny accents, and we love 'em.

And earnest po-faced people who use such pompous phrases as 'stigmatising the poor for corporate gain' are invariably the sort of people who hold such prejudices against ordinary people who do not share their supposedly enlightened attitudes. If they met a real Black Country mon, they would doubtless find him uncouth and politically incorrect, in need of 'educating' in the ways of modern metropolitan Britain.

Well, yo've gorra loff, as we say in the Black Country.

Julie, aged about 10, taken by her Bearwood neighbour

Michael Caine and Julie Walters, in Educating Rita

Aas Mrs Overall in an Acorn Antiques sketch

With Jamie Bell in the smash-hit movie of Billy Elliot

Playing Petula Gordino in TV sitcom dinnerladies

She won the Leading Actress award for her role in Mo

From Rita to Mo, it's truly our Julie

The entertainment industry has saluted the Black Country's own Julie Walters. **ALEX ROSS** reports

SHE was expelled from Holly Lodge Grammar School in Smethwick 50 years ago, but the world of television has come together to mark the rise to stardom of the Black Country's own Julie Walters CBE.

Although first working in insurance and then as a nurse at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, Julie pursued a career in performing arts, studying drama at Manchester Polytechnic and later working for the Everyman Theatre Company in Liverpool.

Since then she has become a television and film icon, achieving six Baftas, a Golden Globe, two International Emmys as well as two Oscar nominations in a career spanning more than 30 years.

And last week, to mark her success, the British Academy of Film and Television Arts held a special Bafta Life in Television at its headquarters in London. The event, which is the start of a new series of sessions celebrating leading figures in the world of television, will see Julie discuss her career.

It follows an announcement Julie will be the feature of an hour-long television special which will be broadcast on BBC Two over Christmas.

The star, whose film credits include Educating Rita, Billy Elliot and Harry Potter, was born in Edgbaston in Birmingham, then raised in Bishopton Road, near Lightwoods Park.

Her end-terraced childhood home features prominently in her autobiography That's Another Story.

When her autobiography was released, she signed a copy and sent it to Smethwick Heritage Centre, which in return sends her copies of its published magazines.

Workers at the centre even received a message last year from Julie via her agent 'wishing them well'.

Development officer Chris Sutton said: "She is a living part of Smethwick's heritage – we are enormously proud of her achievements. It's great to have someone from Smethwick we can follow closely in their rise and stardom in acting.

Julie was presented with the Bafta fellowship in

"Interestingly, she always kept her local accent. She never changed it until she was acting in some of her Hollywood roles – that makes us especially proud.

"And it's nice to know that she doesn't seem to forget about us, I don't think she is the kind of person who would." Julie was born in Smethwick in 1950 and attended Holly Lodge Grammar School, renamed Holy Lodge High School, in Holly Lane.

She was the youngest of three children, the daughter of Irish Catholics Thomas and Mary Bridget. She admits she was not a good student, and her misbehaviour led to the school writing her parents a letter, asking them not to send her back.

Julie binned it, then told her parents she had decided to leave in order to find work, first starting at an insurance company and then as a nurse at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. However, halfway through her training, Julie decided to leave nursing and study English and drama at Manchester Polytechnic, where her boyfriend was a student.

On leaving college, Julie went to Liverpool's Everyman Theatre, first coming to prominence playing the title role in Educating Rita in 1983, for which she won a Bafta and Golden Globe Award. Her award-winning performance came opposite Michael Caine, and was a role she had created on the West End stage only years before.

Two years later she played Adrian Mole's mother Pauline in the television remake of The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole. And then she was the lead role in 1987 comedy film Personal Services, where she played madame Cynthia Payne. Around the same time she was also making her mark as the unforgettable Mrs Overall in the spoof soap opera Acorn Antiques in Victoria Wood As Seen On TV, which ran from 1985 to 1987.

Remake

Four years later Julie starred with Liza Minnelli in Stepping Out, a film she won a Bafta nomination for, as she did for acting in Wide-Eyed and Legless. Another nomination came five years later for her comedy performance in television show Dinnerladies.

Back on the cinema screen, she won a Bafta for actress in a supporting role, as the ballet teacher in Billy Elliot. She starred in Calendar Girls too. But she did not forget television, returning for My Beautiful Son, Murder and The Canterbury Tales: The Wife of Bath. Six years later in 2010 she won a Bafta for leading actress in the Channel 4 drama Mo, based on Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Mo Mowlam.

In May this year she was awarded a Bafta Fellowship. Her next piece of work will be a new 10-part drama which is due to be aired next year.

She will take on the role of Cynthia in Indian Summers, which is still in the production phase.

Ten years ago she was granted the freedom of Sandwell alongside comedian Frank Skinner. Her former neighbour, engraver Michael Warner engraved a box which the award came in. Recently, she backed an appeal to Black Country businesses to support talented local people. She called on business people to donate funds to Smethwick Achievers, a charity that helps people from the town achieve their ambitions.

WEEK IN POLITICS

with Daniel Wainwright

TRY as they might, politicians can't seem to convince people of the benefits of the Black Country and Birmingham teaming up.

UKIP came in for some heavy criticism when it organised a 'hands off the Black Country' protest. And whether you're of the view they're just standing up for people's shared identity or opportunistically hopping on a bandwagon, they would only be able to do so if there was an undercurrent of concern.

It might be fear of the unknown. It might be lack of trust in politicians. It could be a belief this is only the beginning of a big Brum takeover. I don't think for a second it is, but there's no getting away from genuine fears held by a lot of people.

Labour councillors have been stressing there is nothing to worry about but perception is everything. For years, the feeling has been Birmingham has done well for investment, while the Black Country has been left with the crumbs.

The combined authority technically already exists. There's a West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority. That covers the four Black Country boroughs and Birmingham, who are signed up to the combined authority plan, plus Coventry and Solihull, who the others are trying to persuade to join them.

Terms

All that's really going to be different is the venue they meet at and possibly the councillor chairing it. We've had joint working on transport for years and it's never been as big a political hot potato as this authority, which is also going to look at regeneration and job creation.

For me, part of the problem has been the name.

I don't just mean the toxic idea of Greater Birmingham, which politicians have correctly consigned to the waste paper bin.

I mean the legal terms being used – 'combined authority'.

'Combined' means to join or merge to form a single unit. That's something the Labour leaders swear won't happen to their respective councils.

An 'authority' is something with political or administrative power and control. Again, councillors are adamant there will be no new layer of bureaucracy, administration or politicians. To all intents and purposes, then, it's a group of people who get together every so often, have a meeting and discuss common aims.

But it's also a mechanism to draw and use whatever powers might be offered to the West Midlands through devolution. Failure to have the authority set up means we could fall behind – further behind – the likes of Greater Manchester.

Yet without those powers on the table many people aren't comfortable they don't yet know what is being signed up to on their behalf.

Let's ale get ready for top value tipples

HAVING campaigned and pressed MPs for many months, it seems our beer may be about to become cheaper in our pubs, part of the biggest shake-up taking place in the industry for centuries!

At last the dreaded 'beer tie' has been broken through an amendment in Parliament. Pub renters can now opt out of the 400-year-old monopoly that forced tenants to buy their beer from their landlords.

An arrangement that has gone on for 400 years too long!

It is clear from the negative and vitriolic response from large corporations of landlords that this improvement in the pub trade will be a great success.

Over the last two years Darlaston pubs have revived themselves.

Good honest work, quality beers and a 'pick ourselves up by the beer tap' approach has brought life back into several pubs.

Indeed, the Wolverhampton Camra enjoyed a traditional pub crawl from The Prince, Horse and Jockey, The Swan, The Frying Pan and others and we're delighted by the high standards of Darlo pubs.

Two years ago I campaigned to 'Save The Swan' when big business threatened to close the pub for good.

'The Swan' is now a thriving pub at the heart of our town.

Now campaigners from across the Black Country have succeeded in ending 'tied pubs'.

Let's drink to that, there's life and good beer in Darlaston pubs, come along and enjoy yourselves.

CLLR DOUG JAMES
Darlaston South Ward
Walsall Council

Children allowed to run riot

YEARS ago we ruled our children, but now they rule us. Why? Because we are in the EU and the Human Rights Act prevents us from disciplining our children, not just parents but teachers, police or anyone.

Walk through any large store, children crying and squealing for something they want, only to do more so when they are denied.

No smack on the back of the legs or backside, that is now child abuse. Your children ring you up in desperation, pulling their hair out because their children will not stop screaming, do as they are told, or go to sleep. The Human Rights Act in this aspect is a step too far. Parents have rights also.

The problem is, that if parents cannot discipline their children, it could lead to abuse. The constant non-stop screaming, crying and attention that today's children burden their parents with could tip some parents over the edge.

A PARKER, Willenhall

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Breaking monopoly of the unfair pubcos

AFTER years of campaigning by Camra, the GMB union and supporting cross-party MPs, headed by Greg Mulholland, the Commons has approved a bill that will limit the power of the large pub owning companies. The pubcos merely own pubs, they are not brewers, and the bill applies only to pubcos with more than 500 pubs.

The pubco system operates by charging its tenants rents and then compelling them to buy from a limited portfolio of beer at prices as much as 70 per cent above wholesale. A tenant discovered obtaining supplies from an independent source can be heavily fined or dismissed. Against these odds should a tenant increase trade then up goes the rent.

This rotten, unfair, straight jacket of a business plan has been responsible for closing many pubs and forcing many good people out of the profession. Ideally, as with any other business, a tenant should pay an agreed rent and then be free to run that business. If approved by the Lords, the bill will go some way towards this. It will be a gradual process that, hopefully, results in reduced prices to the customer and a better income for the tenant.

The West Midlands is blessed with some of the best beers and greatest pubs in the country. This festive season get into them and drink to this bill getting through the Lords.

KEITH WATKINS, Walsall Camra

Tragedy of male nurse

READING the terrible tragedy of the nurse who found there was no one who was listening to him at the Manor Hospital – I can certainly agree with that.

For all of management's big words about offering support and putting in place stress training – which was only done as a rush measure afterwards, it is not surprising one bit. I blame the management for the stress.

Pressures are being brought to bear on staff constantly. Sooner or later I pray that someone else does not feel this way.

S STROUD
Wednesbury

Cycle record rider details

I AM looking into the cycle rider Bernard Bennett from Birmingham who attempted the year mileage cycle record in 1937 and 1939. If any of your readers are relatives or knew Bernard, could contact me at helenbarter0@googlemail.com

H BARTER, Swindon

Make a meal out of festive donations

From left, Keith Turner from West Bromwich Food Bank and organisers Teresa Haden and Mandy Price

MARKET traders are hoping to bring some Christmas cheer to needy families in West Bromwich by encouraging people to donate to a food bank. People have already given four trolleys worth of tasty food to the project organised by traders at the Kings Square indoor market.

But now they are hoping on a final push for goods ready to hand over the haul to West Bromwich Community Church, in Victoria Street, on December 13. Organisers Mandy Price and Teresa Haden, who run stalls on the market, said they have been delighted with the response.

Management at Kings Square have backed the scheme by handing over £100 towards the scheme which has been used to fill a trolley full of goods. A range of foods have been donated so far including tins of vegetables and fruit and pasta sauces. A special stall has been set up in the market for people to leave any goods and they are asked to make the contact with the traders when they arrive.

Goods which can be kept for a while like tinned goods and dry groceries are preferable according to organisers.

Brothers are banned from their own home

TWO brothers have been banned from their own home in what is believed to be the first use of tough new powers in the UK to tackle anti-social behaviour.

The house on Newcombe Road, Handsworth Wood has been closed following complaints from neighbours. The closure order bars the pair from entering the house.

Neighbours made allegations of drug use and drug dealing and claimed that the illegal activities were attracting addicts who were behaving anti-socially at all hours of the day.

In response, local police worked closely with Birmingham City Council officials to compile a damning portfolio of evidence to ensure the brothers stopped causing a nuisance immediately by having them temporarily removed.

The evidence was presented to the courts and the property was boarded up on Tuesday November 5.

Any person who attempts to enter the property for the three months it's sealed will automatically be guilty of an offence and brought before the courts.

Sgt Nin Rattu, from the

by Heather Large

Handsworth Wood neighbourhood policing team, said: "We've worked closely with Birmingham City Council to resolve this problem as swiftly as possible. "The impact on the community became so great that we had no choice other than to apply to the courts for a closure order and move them on."

Under new powers, if the police or council are satisfied that a particular property is causing nuisance to neighbours, a notice can be served which limits access to the property for a specified period of time.

The court can then support that notice by issuing a closure order for a period of three months which bans all access to the property.

Snow worries as salt bags handed out

From left, Paul Reeves,Darren Jones,Stephen Hill and John Price with their salt cartons they were handing out

HUNDREDS of bags of salt have been dished out to Sandwell's hard-working team of Snow Champions.

It means they are now ready to spring into action when winter weather hits, armed with the equipment to help their communities in bad weather.

The 10kg bags have been made available to people who are able to clear larger areas when snow falls.

There were more 7,000 people registered for the scheme from previous years

They have been joined by 500 new recruits this year.

The new volunteers will all receive a delivery of a snow shovel, salt shakers and a high-vis vest.

Sandwell Council Leader Councillor Darren Cooper said he hoped the scheme would again prove successful.

He added: "Some forecasters say we're going to have a bad winter, so I think it's really important that we're all prepared to do what we can to help one another.

"What I wanted to do this year is provide people who are able to clear larger areas where they live with a bigger sack of salt.

"I'm really proud of how people have all pulled together in previous years to help one another when it snows. Our Snow Champions have cleared paths and driveways for elderly and vulnerable people and helped clear pavements and routes to school.

"It all helps to keep Sandwell moving, and if it saves just one person from a nasty fall, then it's worth it."

To help keep the borough's 300 mile-network of roads gritted, the council has 700 tons of rock salt at its base in Taylors Lane, Oldbury.

The council has nine vehicles covering Sandwell's streets using between 70 and 80 tons of grit and salt each time they go out.

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For more information go to the council website – www.sandwell.gov.uk/snowchampions

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Taekwondo club joy as growth kicks off

Taekwondo fans, Jake Walters, aged six, Isabella Rhodes, four, and Hattie Mason, nine, at Tipton Sports Academy

IT'S only been in operation since May – but a Taekwondo club is going from strength to strength.

The club, which runs twice a week on a Tuesday evening at RSA Academy and on a Saturday morning at Tipton Sports Academy welcomes all ages, whatever their experience to come and have a go at the sport. Head instructor Craig Mason, who is also a qualified fitness instructor, took up the sport at 39 and gained his first degree black belt in four years. He said: "I started the club because I wanted to bring the skill to other people. My first class only had a couple of students,but then all of a sudden it just blew up and I am now teaching 11, which is fantastic."

He added: "Our youngest student is four years old and our oldest is 53. The great thing about Taekwondo is that it proves no matter what age you are you can give the club a go. My nine-year-old daughter Hattie suffers with a cerebral palsy condition, but she took up the sport the same time as me at three-years-old and is now a red tag belt,which is only two away from a black tag."

Thousands of pounds damage by park yobs

VANDALS have caused thousands of pounds worth of damage after setting fire to a climbing frame in a Tipton park.

The net on the 'play dome' in Tibbington Play Area, off Tibbington Crescent, in the townhas been destroyed and the frame damaged.

Council bosses are currently assessing the damage but they say the bill for replacing the equipment will run into several thousands of pounds.

Deputy leader, Councillor Mahboob Hussain, said: "Substantial damage has been done to this valuable and much-used piece of play equipment.

"The climbing net of the play dome has been destroyed, the frame damaged and the safety surface underneath is badly affected.

The fire-hit climbing frame

Difficulties

"We're currently getting quotes to see how much replacement and repairs will cost but it is likely to run into several thousands of pounds. The council has made a massive investment in our parks and play areas, at a time of financial difficulties, as we wanted these much-used facilities to be protected. It's disgraceful that an individual or individuals have deliberately set out to destroy the climbing dome, depriving local children of the opportunity to play on this equipment.

"I urge anyone who had information about those responsible for this heartless act of vandalism to contact the police on their 101 non-emergency number or the council on 0121 569 3871."

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Mosaic tribute to nursery founder

With the memorial mosaic door created for the nursery's kitchen are, from left, Sawyer Morais, aged three, artist and creator Caroline Jariwala, from Bearwood, Joan Hill's daughter Elizabeth Sith, widower Brian Hill and Cao-

IT is an artistic labour of love in memory of a wife and business partner.

Widower Brian Hill has unveiled a mosaic in tribute to his wife Joan, who died in August, aged 66.

Mrs Hill was the director at ABC Nursery in Wighorn Road in Bearwood, a business she set up 27 years ago out of an off-licence the couple ran.

Mr Hill, meanwhile, launched a glass and glazing company after their decision to shut the shop, called Jugs of Beer, due to declining sales. Following her death, Mr Hill, 67, has taken over the nursery, with the couple's daughter Liz Smith now manager. The mosaic shows a rainbow, butterfly, ladybird and snail as well as a bee and caterpillar. Mr Hill said: "This place was something she set up and so it only seems right to put down something permanent in her name."

Mrs Hill's health quickly declined after suffering a water infection. She died just a month later. She was born in Birmingham and attended Harry Lucas Secondary Modern School in Hockley. She met Mr Hill at The Cedar Club in Hockley, before the couple married at Birmingham Register Office 38 years ago.

The couple first rented the off-licence, before taking the opportunity to buy it – but six years into running the shop they decided to close it after a larger one opened nearby.

Mr Hill said: "It was closed for about a year before Joan decided to turn it into a nursery. I did the alterations and she opened. It's gone very well." The couple have four children and one grandchild.

Joan Hill, who died at 66

Latest car park plans revealed after fears

A NEW car park could be built in West Bromwich to alleviate concerns from a disability group over plans to demolish a multi-storey to build an ice rink.

by Andrew Turton

More than 300 people have campaigned for more parking, especially for blue badge holders, in the wake of plans to redevelop the Queens Square multi-storey.

But now council bosses have revealed they have identified land off Bull Street, close to a major new housing development, where another car park could be built.

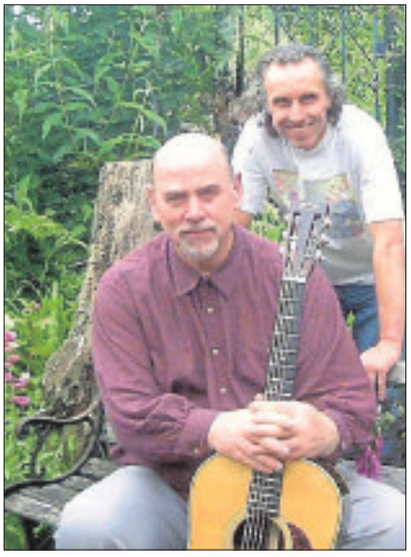
Talks have begun into opening the upper deck of the two-storey New Square car park in the town centre due to the planned demolition of the Queen Square car park.

Sandwell Council wants to sell off the Queens Square multi-storey car park to make space for an ice rink.

The proposed ice rink, which would be operated by national ice rink firm Planet Ice Property Leisure could create at least 100 jobs in the area. Disabled group Access Alliance had tabled the petition but in a report which was due to be noted at last night's Sandwell Council's cabinet petition committee, a decision has been taken to investigate creating a new car park in the town centre. Officials also say parking provision will be discussed as part of the West Bromwich Area Action Plan. This plan will outline developments and regeneration schemes in the town centre and paces for new housing developments on the outskirts.

The Bull Street car park would be close to the Eastern Gateway development where new homes and offices are being built at the moment. The report said: "There would be land available following redevelopment of the multi-storey site ."

Libraries all set for festive countdown



Brian Dakin, aka Billy Spakemon, standing, seen with his friend and fellow entertainer Laurence Hipkiss

LIBRARY staff are gearing up for a host of festive events in the run up to Christmas. Santa Claus will be dropping into Tipton Library on December 13 from 10.30am-noon as part of the library's annual fun day.

He will also be appearing at Thimblemill Library from 5pm-6pm. On December 15, Langley Library will be providing Christmas afternoon tea from 2pm-4pm. Pupils from St Paul's Primary School will be singing carols at Tipton Library on December 16 from 10am. A coffee morning will take place at Hill Top Library on December 19.

Music and comedy are on the agenda with two special events starting at Great Bridge Library December 15 with a Christmas Black Country Night Out in aid of BUDS (Better Understanding of Dementia for Sandwell) featuring poetry from Billy Spakemon, comedy from Marlene the Black Country Wench and music from Scarbelly Blues Band and Tipton Community Choir. Tickets are £3 and £1.50 for concessions and can be reserved on 0121 557 3277.

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Civic leaders attack UKIP over identity protest

UKIP has been accused of misleading the public over the threat posed by a Birmingham and Black Country combined authority.

The party's West Midlands MEP Bill Etheridge called on bosses at Dudley Council to delay work on the deal until the plan's implications had been fully discussed.

Mr Etheridge, who is also a councillor for Sedgley, said local people had not been given the chance to express their views.

The scheme will see Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton councils team up with Birmingham on issues which cross their borders.

Bosses have stressed the move will not see councils merge or lead to the creation of a Greater Birmingham.

Protected

Newly-appointed Dudley Council leader Peter Lowe has slammed UKIP's claims that a combined authority would damage local democracy and threaten the Black Country's identity. Speaking during Dudley Council's full council meeting, he said: "Let's get one thing straight. The Black Country's identity will be protected. Dudley will be protected. Each and everyone of our diverse communities will be protected.

"And the interesting thing is, UKIP know it, but they have deliberately misled those people up there in the public gallery – shame on them."

Council leaders in the five districts want to set up a combined authority to take on powers which may be devolved from London.

About 30 people gathered outside the council offices before the meeting to take part in a UKIP-led protest called Hands off Birmingham and Hands off the Black Country.

Sedgley-based Mr Etheridge, who will be his party's candidate in Dudley North at next year's General Election and is a West Midlands MEP, argued that there was more to the plan than just working together.

UKIP organised a protest over fears that Brum could dominate the Black Country

"This is changing the way local government works in the West Midlands and there will be people protesting across the region. We don't have to go down that route. Let's set the example and have an open debate."

Other councillors slammed the UKIP group for failing to turn up to a meeting of party leaders.

Conservative group leader Patrick Harley said: "If you had been sensible you would have found out what this is not about. It is not about Greater Birmingham. It is about joint working in the Black Country."

Councillor Darren Cooper, Labour leader of Sandwell Council, said: "I cannot see what it is that UKIP are opposed to. No-one is going to lose their identity. We will not become part of any Greater Birmingham.

"This is about councils working together on matters that go across local authority boundaries. That's all."

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Snow being dumped in Wolverhampton, February, 1947

Tarmac Ltd help thaw a road in Cannock on February 10

Workman laying a new sewer in Lower Gornal in 1947

Skaters at Dartmouth Park, West Bromwich, in 1963

Hidden depths of a snowy winter

MEMORY LANE

by Carl Chinn

WITH blizzards, snowstorms and freezing conditions having swept across North America, many older people will have thought 'we're for it next'.

For so often in the past, harsh weather conditions in the USA have been the harbinger of bitter cold and heavy snowfalls here in Britain. And with such thoughts whirling around our minds, memories often turn to the worst winters we have endured.

For me it was the winter of 1962-63. I was just six but still have vivid memories of that most icy of times. Heavy snow began falling on Boxing Day and soon afterwards fierce blizzards transformed the landscape, covering it with massive snowdrifts. Then came the big freeze.

I remember but when my Mom and Dad talked about bad winters they always highlighted the winter of 1947 and that is the one that June M Lloyd brings to mind.

She writes: "One night I found myself unable to sleep. Sitting down, sipping a hot drink my mind drifted back to my childhood. I was eleven years old and lived with my parents and four sisters and brothers at 12 Bristnal Hall Lane, Warley, Worcestershire, now known as Sandwell. The war was over but everything was still rationed. Mom had books of coupons for food, clothes, fuel. Well I awoke one morning to find there was deep snow everywhere.

"I looked out of my bedroom window; the snow was so deep it was right over people's front doors and windows. I woke my sister Sheila who was nine years old and told her to come and look.

"She was so scared when she saw the snow, that she ran downstairs crying for mom. I followed her downstairs to the kitchen, mom, dad and my other brothers and sisters were crammed into the kitchen.

"There was a roaring fire which kept sizzling as the snow melted above the chimney. How would we get out to the toilet? I asked mom, she said, 'You will have to use the white bucket in the bathroom until your dad and I try to unblock the back door."

"Dad tried to clear a path to the coal house using the coal shovel we kept near the fireplace. Then my older brothers started to help him. It was like living in a snow house, I read about those at school. Dad and my brothers worked hard all that day and finally made a path to the coalhouse and toilet. The snow was piled so high you couldn't see the back garden.

"We could hear Mr Fletcher next door doing the same thing. There was a lot of cussing going on. Mr Fletcher's chickens were buried alive under the snow. He later shared them with us neighbours.

Struggled

"All the men and boys worked hard in our street all that day and the next day trying to make a path to the 'Two Brewers', a pub at the bottom of our street, and to Mrs Smith's grocery shop.

"It was so eerie walking between those banks of snow. "I struggled back with the shopping, mainly tinned food, flour, butter, lard, bread and candles. It was a good job Mrs Smith had received a delivery the day before the snow came down. The radio came on and they said more snow was coming. No-one could go to work as the roads were blocked.

"The radio came on at eight o'clock that night warning people not to use their gas. This was in case they blew up. There were icicles on the windows upstairs so we couldn't sleep there.

"We dragged some mattresses downstairs to sleep on. The boys on one and us girls on the other. We had blankets over us as it was too cold upstairs. I think mom and dad slept in the bathroom."

June adds: "Mom banked the kitchen fire up with wet slack so it would stay in all night. We slept in the front room downstairs; it was so cold even our dog, Gyp, slept on our bed at night.

"We had to be careful with the food as there were no deliveries to the shop; no-one could get to work as there were no buses running.

"We listened to the radio for the news every night and played cards to pass the time. We had porridge for breakfast with salt on; dinner was powdered eggs, and bread and lard. The main meals were eaten by the grown-ups although we had soup and bread made from the chicken or rabbit bones.

"I remember dad breaking up some chairs and the wardrobe vanished from our bedroom to keep the fire going. We played out in the snow tunnels sometimes, but not for long as it was so cold. All the neighbours helped each other and shared what food they had.

"Finally the council men were able to clear the main roads so that people could go back to work. Bread was brought round on a sledge pulled by a horse, fresh bread from Grant's bakery, it tasted wonderful.

"My brother Stan and I had to go to the coal yard at Smethwick to get some coal and coke. We had to pawn dad's suit first to get some money and I had to do mom's shopping on the slate until the wages were paid. It was hard work as the pavements weren't clear.

"It was very hard work helping my brother to push the pram full of wet coal and coke back home through the snow; still he did give me a ride in the pram going there.

"There was no schools open yet it was great fun building snowmen and throwing snowballs at each other. It wasn't dark at night either as the snow made everywhere lighter. The only sounds you heard over those weeks were the men clearing the snow away and us children shouting to one another.

"Otherwise it was so quiet; no birds were singing or flying around. I've never seen snow like that before and hope I never do again!

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Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Sandwell Family Information Service

Recycle all these items in your blue lid bin at Christmas and all year round

Merry Christmas!

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Happy Christmas to all Sandwell residents
24

There will be no garden waste collections between Monday 22 December and Friday 2 January.

All collections will return to normal from Monday 5 January 2015.

If you would like FREE text updates to your mobile about the bin service please text your postcode only to 07860 019 200

Christmas & New Year bin collection dates

Monday 22 December	No change
Tuesday 23 December	No change
Wednesday 24 December	No change
Thursday 25 December	Saturday 27 December
Friday 26 December	Sunday 28 December
Monday 29 December	No change
Tuesday 30 December	No change
Wednesday 31 December	No change
Thursday 1 January	Friday 2 January
Friday 2 January	Saturday 3 January

www.sandwell.gov.uk/recycling

serco

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

A natural history of Christmas

Wolverhampton Women's Luncheon Club

THERE were 80 members present at the November 26 meeting at The Lindens, Tettenhall Road, together with 13 guests and the speaker Dr Michael Leach.

After welcoming everyone, the chairman asked for a short silence in memory of Margaret Arnold, a past member, who died recently.

She then said Grace. The menu was celery and stilton soup, roast turkey with trimmings, Christmas pudding with brandy sauce, tea or coffee with mints and mince pies.

After the lunch, Susan introduced Dr Leach. The title of his talk was 'The Natural History of Christmas'. A zoologist, full-time wildlife author and photographer, Dr Leach has filmed animals all over the world

He said there is not sufficient evidence to guess with any accuracy the year of Jesus' birth, although it seems it was somewhere between 7 BC and 2 AD.

He said the modern Christmas started with the Victorians and explained the origins of mistletoe and the yule log and the introductions of mince pies, turkey and Brussels sprouts.

He concluded by referring to the 'The Twelve days of Christmas'. Suzanne Morgan gave the vote of thanks.

The AGM will be held on Wednesday, January 28. Only paid up members should attend. The menu for the next luncheon will be cream of asparagus soup, pork in red wine, lemon sponge and custard.

Popular guest gives an enthralling talk

Luncheon club Chairman Mary Jones, left, with guest speaker Sue Clegg

Dudley South Ladies Luncheon Club

THE club enjoyed an excellent November lunch at the Kingfisher Hotel, Wall Heath.

This was followed by a popular return visit from Sue Clegg whose talk "Waterborne in the Grenadines" enthralled members for 45 minutes.

Sue is a retired policewoman who is an expert on finger printing.

She received a Gold Award from the Duke of Edinburgh in 1970 and when she retired she was interviewed successfully along with other Gold achievers to form a team of six.

They were trained and sent out to the Caribbean islands to join award winners selected from other countries in order promote and introduce young people to the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

The team found themselves "waterborne" on the "Grenadine Star" sailing out to the Grenadines with basic supplies in their back-packs and two dinghies.

On arrival, they all ran into the blue sea and invited the young people to join them. No one followed. Not one youngster could swim.

Eventually the team took them to an uninhabited island for a 24-hour survival test which ended in helping rescue survivors from an air crash.

This flight between islands had ended in disaster but as a result the youngsters achieved their Duke of Edinburgh award. Sue now travels throughout the world promoting the award scheme.

Cast sails good ship lollipop

Great Wyrley TG

GREAT Wyrley Townswomen Guild presented an old time variety concert at Great Wyrley Methodist Church.

It was staged to raise funds for their chosen charity, which this year is Acorns children's hospice in Walsall.

The concert was compered by the wonderful Leonard Sachs, aka Pauline Benton.

The show comprised a mixture of comedy acts that included sketches, songs and sing-a-long in the old music hall style.

Songs included Underneath the Lamplight, Oh you Beautiful Doll and Good Ship Lollipop. The final was a rousing rendition of We'll Meet again.

The ensemble was assisted by husbands and partners who ensured a smooth organised evening, and a good time was had by all.

How premature baby changed Corrine's life

MUM to Thaila Dymond, Corrine Dacosta is a Neonatal Sister for Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust.

She arrived in her current role through a life-changing experience when at only 27 weeks pregnant she delivered her daughter and embarked upon a marathon six months as Thaila was cared for in the neonatal unit.

She explained: "At that time I was working in the operating theatres as a theatre nurse, and having my daughter so prematurely was a frightening experience.

"It was a long rocky road as she was ventilated for 10 weeks, and had CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure – used to keep airways open) for eight weeks.

"We left the unit on oxygen after six months.

Support

"I went back to theatres after my maternity leave but my heart wasn't there anymore.

"I kept in contact with a few of the neonatal nurses who had cared for my daughter and we'd started a parent support group.

"After much consideration I made the decision to move to neonates.

"I knew it'd make me or break me, but thankfully I've found my niche, and haven't looked back.

"My job is my life, and I like to think I carry out my daily duties with pride helping parents through what can be a very difficult time.

"Thaila is now six years old and for the last three years I have worked in the neonatal unit.

"I absolutely love my job and have been in the NHS for seven years.

"For me there is no career I can think of that tops what I do today. It was a career highlight for me to obtain a first in my nursing degree and then go on to pass the neonatal intensive care course, and recently I was promoted to sister, so I'm really concentrating on that now.

"I work with a very committed team and meet a wide variety of parents with whom I can connect, as I have been exactly where they are, worrying about their tiny baby and trusting in the staff looking after them.

"There is no typical shift at work, as one day I could be giving one to one care to a critically ill baby and the next supporting parents to provide care for their baby after their baby is discharged.

"I remember attending the delivery of a baby born at 24 weeks, and growing attached to the baby and family. It was a very emotional moment to see them back at our parent support group."

In her spare time Corrine enjoys keeping fit and spending quality time with her own family.

She enjoys study, and is the developmental care lead for neonatal.

She loves the opportunity to continually update her skills and the fact that her role gives her the opportunity to learn. In the future she would like to be an advanced neonatal nurse or matron.

Corrine says her own hero is her daughter: "After everything we have been through, she is my best friend and has taught me that life is not to be taken for granted.

"She is an amazing little girl, no matter what she is going through she always has a smile on her face."

NHS HEROES

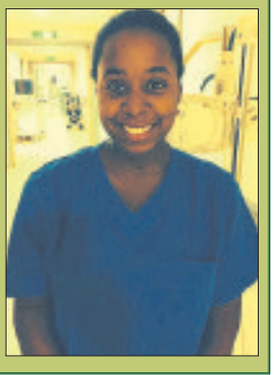
ONCE again we focus some of our time on the quiet heroes of the NHS, from a wide variety of backgrounds doing a wide variety of jobs.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust is one of the Black Country's largest NHS organisations.

It employs 7,500 people, many of whom live locally.

Last year, the trust provides care from 150 locations.

This week we highlight: CORRINE DACOSTA



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Passenger problems at new street on rise

PASSENGERS crammed into rush-hour trains will be little surprised to learn that the busiest rail stations, including Birmingham New Street, are getting ever-more crowded.

The number of passengers travelling through New Street rose by 8.3 per cent to 34.75 million last year, new figures reveal.

The railway station was the eighth busiest in the country. It comes as the staff at New Street prepare for another busy weekend with thousands of extra people arriving in the city for the Frankfurt Christmas Market.

Extra security staff have been drafted in to provide crowd control but last weekend the station struggled to cope with passengers forced to queue up outside the station after managers were forced to limit access to the concourse and platforms.

Upwards

People took to Twitter to voice their complaints including Philip McAllister who claimed his five-year-old child injured in the crush. The crowd control measures will be in place at the station, which is undergoing a £600 million transformation, from 3pm tonight.

The latest figures from the Office of Rail Regulation, show some London stations saw upwards of eight per cent more passengers last year, with the total for the busiest of them all – Waterloo – approaching the 100 million mark. Of the 10 busiest stations, Euston had the largest increase last year, rising 9.4 per cent.

The only non-London stations in the top 10 were Birmingham New Street and 10th-placed Leeds, where numbers were up 5.3 per cent to 27.73 million

Taxis seen outside the Birmingham New Street railway station

Harvey set for city stage

ACTRESS Maureen Lipman will be among the cast in a new production of Pulitzer Prize-winning comedy Harvey.

It will open at Birmingham Repertory Theatre on February 6. Maureen will be playing Veta, who tries to get her brother, Elwood P Dowd played by James Dreyfus, committed rather than risk the family's reputation.

Elwood has only one character flaw – an unwavering friendship with a six-foot tall, invisible rabbit named Harvey. In order to save the family's reputation, Elwood's sister Veta takes him to see psychiatrist Dr William Chumley. But when the doctor mistakenly commits anxiety-ridden Veta instead of her brother, it sets off what is described as an hilarious whirlwind of confusion and chaos as everyone tries to catch a man and his invisible rabbit.

Harvey will run until February 21. For tickets call 0121 236 4455 or visit Birmingham-rep.co.uk

Are you a member of a local voluntary group?

Do you have a good news story?

Do you need to promote an event for a charity or a local good cause?

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Please call the chronicle team on 01902 319 588

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Advertisement Feature

Delicious freshly prepared and cooked dishes are always on the menu at the refurbished Massalla Lounge

Delicious freshly prepared and cooked dishes are always on the menu at the refurbished Massalla Lounge with seasonal menus ensuring that a new dish can be tasted by regular customers to offer variety and choice. Chefs at the restaurant cook using traditional techniques enabling them to capture the true essence of Pan Asian cuisine.

The owner and staff strive to ensure your dining experience starts from the minute you set foot inside the restaurant. With a stylish licensed bar area for you to wait whilst being shown to your table or to retire after enjoying your feast, you are able to absorb the atmosphere whilst enjoying traditional Indian beer or a selection from the extensive wine Menu.

With a seasonal menu offering a variety of new dishes from which you may struggle to decide which sumptuous dish to choose, the tempting offer which runs from Sunday to Thursday means two people may dine for the price of one between 5pm - 10pm.

Selections can be made from the seafood, classic or the Chef Recommendations whilst also being aware of the New Year Health Kick craze, you can select from the Healthy Options menu.

All dishes are freshly prepared and they are proud to be able to cater for dinners, who have a special dietary requirements. A host of chefs are available to create that special meal for you to enjoy. Appetisers can be ordered from the sharing platter section, allowing diners to taste more than one starter expanding their preference for future dining experience. Simply select your preference nibble whilst you chat and wait to be shown to the area for the main event. This extra time is taken to freshly prepare your dish.

To round off the evening why not choose from the dessert menu which offers both hot and cold dishes from the menu or perhaps select from the traditional Indian sweet options to finish of your meal. Coffee and tea are also served along with a extensive liquor coffee should you wish to round of the evening. With the current offer allowing two dinners to enjoy the selection and pay for just 1, now is the time to visit the restaurant between Sunday to Thursday. The restaurant is open Friday & Saturday when you are able to select from the standard menu or take advantage of the takeaway service.

Eyes on our great offers

Eat For Less Back by Popular Demand

2 for 1 on all main meals* (eat in only)

a-la-carte menu also available 5pm - 10pm Sunday - Thursday Terms & conditions apply

Not available on 14th February or in conjunction with any other offers

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Women seeking men

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RITA attractive blonde with a very kind heart seeks special man to share my life with. Please get in touch if like me you are fed up with always being the single friend. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412987**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel No: 0905 002 1883 Box No: 413399**

JAN 5ft8ins slim pretty lady in great shape, open-minded, laidback, GSOH, OHAC, many interests, WLTM someone for cuddling up with and to share good and bad times. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412931**

LUCY, 32yrs, blonde lady seeks naughty boys of any age for no strings fun. **Tel No: 0905 002 1887 Box No: 413443**

ANN slim attractive N/S lady who is easy to get along with, looking for romantic interesting man for new adventures together, hopefully ltr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412911**

ADVENTUROUS sexy lady, 38yrs, married but seeks no strings fun with discreet man, any age. I'm tall, slim and dominant. Aca. **Tel No: 0905 002 1937 Box No: 415301**

JULIE loving, caring, honest, seeks real gent to share conversation and have a great time, friendship/relationship, who knows? **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412777**

LUCY, broadminded 18yrs seeks discreet fun with men any age. Aca. **Tel No: 0905 002 1941 Box No: 365051**

SALLY stunning lady looking for dinner dates, partying and generally having a good time with generous man looking for his mojo! No strings, go on call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412599**

SEXY brunette, mid 20's busty, adventurous broad minded seeks no strings fun. **Tel No: 0905 002 1949 Box No: 361739**

DEBS petite attractive auburn haired, good listener, romantic, enjoys socialising, cosy nights in with Mr Right, seeking similar caring N/S single dad. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412387**

SALLY, 38yrs large cuddly lady seeks slim men for discreet meetings. **Text Only 4550193**

JAN slim curvy professional warm, affectionate, looking to fill full time vacancy with similar male who loves cuddles/kisses and bikes for romance. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412167**

TRUDY 36yrs, wltm broadminded men of any age/area for daytime meetings. **Text Only 4550194**

ATTRACTIVE slim brunette, 47, N/S, seeks tall, slim male for a cut above the average relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412725**

MELANIE, 38, slim, blonde and bored. Call if you want no strings fun. **Text Only 4550198**

KAREN pretty blonde, short in stature, big personality, keeps fit, loves dogs, seeking honest, caring male who can make me laugh. Nothing too serious just fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412377**

JENNI, 52 bored housewife wants no strings fun with younger chap. **Text Only 4550197**

JEAN petite female who enjoys golf, days out, cosy evenings in, holidays, WLTM older male in his 60's with a good personality and big heart. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412359**

JULIE really fun loving slim pretty female 38 looking for nice guy to go out with, get to know and hopefully enjoy a relationship with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411517**

GWENDOLINE honest, trustworthy, seeks caring gent who enjoys cinema, theatre, holidays and nights out for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412293**

SLIM active lady, 60's, N/S, seeks honest, kind gent, 57-62 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407693**

DIANE voluptuous curvy and all woman, loves dancing, walking, cosy nights in, WLTM nice man for friendship, hopefully leading to something more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412321**

SARA bored blonde looking for single gents for fun, chats and meets, looking forward to hearing from you, don't be shy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412055**

EMMA petite young looking 31yr old attractive single brunette, loves walking, talking, music, seeks honest romantic 30-40yrs. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412037**

ANNABELL 29 slim sophisticated well travelled interesting sensual fit brunette with lots to offer seeks older male to appreciate and treat me well. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412177**

KAREN slim, tall, attractive 36yr old normal female who likes shopping, socialising, nights in/out seeking thoughtful genuine male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412041**

KIM 25yrs feminine, pretty, big blue eyes, GSOH, varied interests, likes romantic beach walks, cosy nights in, seeking honest loving man for ltr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411777**

CAROL young 47, caring, loyal, likes music, concerts, cinema, theatre, seeks male with similar interests for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411919**

PROFESSIONAL black lady, likes cooking, music, countryside, seeking honest, reliable gent, possibly farmer for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411763**

VICKY 37yr professional, mum to one, sensual and very attractive, looking for a real man, tall, fit, sincere and passionate to enjoy each other's company. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411695**

LUCY beautiful busty bubbly blonde 32yrs, seeking naughty boy to enjoy the fun side of life with, age, status and looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411691**

LINDA single and living alone, attractive, young looking, bubbly, WLTM similar young at heart companion to be close with, enjoy chats and romantic dates. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410119**

WIDOW 68, 5ft 5ins, medium build, attractive, likes walks, reading, holidays, seeks sincere, N/S male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411745**

JEAN young at heart lady, active, 70 plus, N/S, GSOH, likes walks, gardening, outings, WLTM sincere, caring male, 69-74 for companionship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411711**

TINA sexy black female looking for healthy distractions with fun adult companion, interested? You won't be disappointed, give me a call. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411519**

LYNNE young looking attractive Indian female with GSOH and down to earth attitude, looking for likeminded male for date nights, hopefully more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411219**

EMMIE 50, attractive brunette, 5ft 3ins, OHAC, likes country walks, music, reading, seeks genuine, friendly, professional male with GSOH for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411281**

RETIRED happy, caring, attractive female, likes gardening, travel, animals, comedy, seeks tall, funny, kind chap, Shropshire. **0906 500 3955 Box No: 411459**

RITA naughty 40's petite pretty female looking for that special man in my life, any age, to get to know and see what happens, you only live once remember! **0906 500 3955 Box No: 410959**

SUE 34, likes most things in life, even football! looking for my Mr Wonderful thought I would give this a try. Come on what do we have to loose, call me. **0906 500 3955 Box No: 410765**

CAROL slim attractive blonde, sporty, easy going, broadminded looking for likeminded male with plenty of va va voom, 35-45. **0906 500 3955 Box No: 409717**

KAREN 32 a hardworking petite blonde, enjoys nights out, music, etc, WLTM for more than just friendship with similar chilled, kind, easy going guy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410461**

SUSAN 64, lively, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. **0906 500 3955 Box No: 411329**

SUE 38, attractive broadminded attentive, enjoys meals in/out etc, not necessarily looking for Mr Right as Mr Wrong or even Mr Right now could be fun! Call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411049**

ANGIE attractive slim blonde just looking for a lovely spontaneous guy who like me just wants good company and a nice relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410641**

KATHERINE 35yr old outgoing single female looking to enjoy dates with similar male also looking for fun times in or out. Age, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410565**

PAULINE attractive divorced female with no ties, employed with my own home, likes nights in/out, lots of tlc to give to the right person, call me for a chat, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411039**

JEN attractive sensual petite blonde with OHAC seeks confident fit professional male to enjoy and share good times, if that's you pls get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410949**

ARE you dark or bald, with hairy chest, well built, educated, verbal, articulate dom or sub, broadminded and ready to be put in your place? Curious to find out more? call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410637**

29YR old black beautiful busty tall loving very sensual lady, likes football, making friends, seeking genuine white male for enjoyable loving relationship. pls no time wasters. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410577**

ZOE 25 long haired sensual female, very naughty, broadminded and open, looking for similar fun guy for uncomplicated adult meets. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409719**

JANE attractive, feminine open-minded mature female genuinely looking for adult fun. No time wasters please. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409715**

JILL 50, attractive, 5ft, blonde, own home, no ties, likes films, reading, travel, music, good social circle, seeking that someone special. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410105**

ATTRACTIVE professional lady, 56, enjoys country walks, meals out, seeks professional gent with GSOH to enjoy the good things in life. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409895**

ELAINE attractive 39yr old blonde single mum seeking respectful male/dad with similar interests for adult friendship, hopefully leading to love. looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410117**

DONNA 27yrs blue eyed blonde with cute dimpled smile, loves socialising but looking for that special someone with GSOH to cuddle up with, enjoy fun/good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409733**

MARGARET OHAC, professional, sincere, adventurous, loving, kind, solvent lady who enjoys most things WLTM caring male with similar refined tastes. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407925**

HI I'm Pam, cuddly, attractive, self-sufficient, employed, looking for similar young looking, sincere male for hopeful ltr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407933**

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YOUNG early 40's female, GSOH, kind, caring, considerate, seeks male for friendship, possible romance. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410847**

CAROL 38 attractive romantic not looking for fairy tales just happy endings, seeking lovely male to put the sparkle back into my life. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410721**

CLAIRE voluptuous tall feminine attractive lady who loves good company, fine wine/food, travel, WLTM tall professional for romance dates and hopeful ltr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410627**

LORRAINE 5ft 9ins, slim, 57, nurse, looking for someone to look after me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410543**

MICHELLE 37, looking for laughter fun and romance with the right guy, if you could be him and have nothing to loose call me for a chat. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410415**

TAYLOR 21 black beautiful classy intelligent, loves to have lots of fun and enjoy life to the full, seeking mature guy to make me happy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409911**

WENDY 50, blue eyes, 5ft 7ins, likes music, meals out, seeks white male, 45-55 with similar interests and GSOH for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410499**

73YR old Hereford lady, GSOH, young at heart, many interests, seeks caring, genuine gent of similar age for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410331**

NICKY bubbly curvy fun blonde, varied interests, enjoys meals out, holidays, seeking N/S male with GSOH for possible ltr. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410479**

LIZ 5ft 7ins, attractive, outgoing, likes walks, dogs, cooking, seeks male for fun and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410395**

BLACK female, 45, seeking older gent, 60 plus who knows how to look after a lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407787**

ATTRACTIVE 49yr old divorced lady, looking for honest, reliable man for LTR, 49-60. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409955**

ABBA girl blonde lookalike, size 16, attractive, bubbly, OHAC, seeking solvent, refined, handsome guy with full head of hair, 5ft 9ins plus, professional and courteous. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409151**

NEETA Black beauty, classy, intelligent 21yrs, loves to enjoy life, have lots of fun and be spoilt, give me a call. Any age, looks and status. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409101**

HI I'm Jo, first timer, newly divorced perfect size 10, blonde, attractive, tactile and looking to fall in love again. Age unimportant, dad welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409089**

SUSIE 32yr old nurse who likes cosy nights in with a good bottle of wine and spending quality times with great company, if you feel the same pls get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408877**

BABS 27yrs slender with dark haired passionate Italian who loves to dance, eat out, looking for nice n/s male to spend quality adult time with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407943**

BUBBLY 60 plus lady, slim, fair hair, comfy in jeans and leather jacket, seeks similar male for friendship etc. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408859**

JOANNA 34, in need of tlc, wining, dining being treated like the princess I am, looking for sugar daddy, that someone special to love me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408869**

MARIA gorgeous outgoing bbw 27, good fun, caring, romantic, looking for that special someone to share life with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408733**

KIM attractive single lady new to area looking for meet new friends and maybe a new love interest. I have many hobbies and am interesting to know, pls call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408489**

TAYLOR attractive very busty curvy black female looking for fun times with open-minded male who is also looking for fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408311**

BETHANY 25yr old blonde, slim size 10 with great personality, looking for nice guy to share my life with, single dad welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408253**

KIRSTY blonde blue eyed size 12 nurse, enjoys cosy nights, driving, holidays, socialising, WLTM broadminded male for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409259**

KATH blonde independent female, employed with OHAC looking for fun and laughter with likeminded nice easy going male, any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407955**

TRACY slim dark haired beauty, petite, hardworking career, enjoys dancing, nights out, WLTM loving male who can make me laugh for an adult relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409419**

SHARON very attractive British black lady, sexy size 6 looking for white male to fall in love with. Beautiful people can be lonely too. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409263**

MID naughty forties female looking fun, thrills and discreet meets, give me a call, you won't be disappointed. Any age with own accommodation. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409109**

ANITA very attractive black female, seeking mature white/Asian man to enjoy uncomplicated relationship with no ties. Any age, pls contact me, I'm very lonely. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408505**

FEMALE many interests, seeks male, 40-55 for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408537**

28YR old female, seeking male with GSOH for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408639**

MIXED raced lady, 34, widely travelled, seeking gent, 30-40 for romance. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408429**

68YR old lady, likes gardening, meals out, days out, looking for sincere gent to share time with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408413**

JENNY single independent attractive lady, tall and leggy, sensual and looking for very special male friend. Only genuine callers pls. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408285**

CHRIS blue eyed blonde single female, lots of interests, loves travel, beach, nights in/out, looking for mature sincere gent for possible ltr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407615**

ATTRACTIVE female, young 49, 5ft 7ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, genuine, loyal, easygoing, GSOH, seeks tall, handsome male, 40-50 for fun times, friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406135**

LITTLE bit nice and definitely a little bit naughty! Imaginative curvy blonde seeks male for kisses and cuddles. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 363428**

62YR old female, widowed, small, slim, attractive, kind, outgoing, likes meals out, dancing, holidays, nights in, seeking professional gent. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394106**

CAROL 36, looking for older experienced gent 50-70yrs for fun times only, discretion assured and expected. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401853**

Men seeking women

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network extras. Texts cost £1.50 per message sent.

JEFF young 62, N/S, tall, fit, energetic, seeking new female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413053**

JAMES, hard working single dad, late 30's seeks single mum for family days out. **Text Only 4550196**

JOHN 5ft 10ins, slim, GSOH, various interests, seeks female for friendship/relationship, 35-52. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413107**

RETIRED male, seeking no strings adult fun and frolics, discretion assured, age/status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413067**

TONY young looking 50, 5ft 8ins, slim, seeks slim rock chick, trendy for dates and LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413049**

KEVIN 53, looking for a friend/partner and a lover. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412869**

NORTH Shropshire male, 67, N/S, solvent, GSOH, likes walks, travel, music, holidays, countryside, seeks N/S lady for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412867**

MAURICE gentleman, 59, gentle, kind, caring, loving, generous, seeks lady with GSOH and similar personality, slim-medium build. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412859**

MALE seeking female companion for outings, friendship and holidays. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412705**

STEPHEN 58, good looking, likes art, travel, seeking female, 50 plus for companionship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412633**

MALCOLM 61, smoker, great personality, likes coach holidays, drives, pubs, meals out, nights out, 60's music, seeks female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412523**

TONY 52, dark hair, white male, 6ft, confident, GSOH, seeks black female. Genuine ad. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412481**

TALL 42yr old sincere male, caring, honest, loving, seeking female, 30-40 for fun, friendship and good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412483**

COUNTRY loving businessman, honest, medium build, N/S, OHAC, seeks professional, genuine, caring, honest, N/S female for loving relationship, 45-55. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412445**

JOHN, 42yrs professional genuine gent seeks caring lady to treat as a princess. **Text Only 4550195**

ALAN tall widower, 76, looking for female of similar age who enjoys meals out, holidays, walks and holidays. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412261**

ROY mid 60's, N/S, car driver, young outlook, seeks lady for friendship. West Bromwich area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412083**

PAUL 62, seeks attractive Wolverhampton lady for discreet daytime fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410799**

TALL slim gent, 60, seeks slim, attractive lady for no strings relationship. Discretion assured. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412227**

IAN 65, romantic, likes to wine/dine, days out, seeking younger female for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412087**

MARK fun loving, easy going, fair hair blue eyes, athletic, tanned, looking for good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411989**

FIT bubbly male, athletic, blue eyes, short fair hair, easy going, loving, GSOH, seeking female for no strings fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411901**

TALL attractive Shrewsbury male, 54, seeks attractive female for fun and excitement in the daytime. Discretion assured. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411823**

TIGER Woods lookalike, seeking pretty BBW for good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411801**

MALE 74, fit, N/S, OHAC, seeks slim lady of similar age for days out, holidays and walks. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411673**

TALL mature male, seeks younger, attractive mixed race lady for spoiling and pampering. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411505**

PHIL genuine male, 57, OHAC, looking for female, any race, status and age for no strings discreet fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411461**

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DEE 49, divorced, handsome, fit, slim, seeks lady, any age for lasting, meaningful relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411415**

MARK 5ft 11ins, blond hair, blue eyes, slim-medium build, athletic, likes nights in/out, socialising, meals out, pubs, seeks female with similar interests and GSOH for fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411335**

SLIM attractive Asian male, GSOH, seeks likeminded discreet female for adult friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411305**

MALE 67, seeking lady 30-50 for friendship/companionship and occasional days/nights out. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411293**

INTELLIGENT sincere Shropshire male, slim, young 60's, playfully assertive, seeking complimentary, responsive, feminine lady, 50-60's who enjoys music, books, the arts and countryside. **0906 500 3955 Box No: 411285**

EASY going male 45, likes sports, seeks female for relationship. **0906 500 3955 Box No: 411541**

5FT 6ins male, dark hair/eyes, glasses, likes meals out, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **0906 500 3955 Box No: 411455**

IAN 47, 5ft 11ins, likes cinema, nights in/out, sports, socialising, GSOH seeking similar female. **0906 500 3955 Box No: 411297**

ATTRACTIVE male, seeks 100% adult fun with woman, any age/looks or status. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411253**

MALE WLTM pear shaped lady, 50-65. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411109**

PAUL 62, seeks attractive Wolverhampton lady for discreet daytime fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411099**

TRUSTWORTHY fit, active, caring, easy going male, N/S, 68, GSOH, seeks genuine lady, 59-72 for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411083**

TOM 31, seeking female for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411165**

ADVENTUROUS 32yr old slim, dark haired, creative, likes music, cycling and photography, seeks likeminded female to share fun and happiness with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 352753**

60YR old male, 5ft 11ins, WLTM female, 40-60 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411097**

STEVE 63, tall, fit, energetic, N/S, seeks lady, 55-60 for friendship and who knows. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410941**

SEAN 46, brown hair/eyes, average looks/build, loving, caring, understanding, seeks female to share good times with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410845**

ATTRACTIVE tall, dark, professional male, broadminded, adventurous, clean, discreet, GSOH, easy going, good company, looking for lady for fun times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411019**

KEV 53, Stoke, seeking female for fun, romance, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410997**

JEFF 35, GSOH, likes cinema, swimming, ice-skating, seeks special female with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410737**

Men seeking men

DIVORCED male, young, fit 50, generous, own business, seeks male, any nationality, 18-20 for good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412727**

45 year old gay guy, sincere, caring, honest, loving looking for a sincere gay guy 40 to 50 years old. **Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4423358**

MALE 40's, discreet, seeks black male, under 30 for fun and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412415**

YOUNG male, 25, educated, likes arts, dogs, travel, classic cars, comedy, seeks similar older male for LTR. London/Shropshire anywhere. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412463**

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Traditional nativity which is still stable in schools

By Dan Wainwright

IS there really no room at the inn for a traditional nativity? That's the conclusion of users of a parenting website who believe just a third of schools still put on a Christmas play focusing on the birth of Jesus.

Political correctness in a multicultural society has been blamed. But an investigation by The Chronicle's sister publication The Express & Star found that, in the West Midlands at least, the true meaning of Christmas is alive and well in schools.

Dozens of primary schools in Wolverhampton, Dudley, Walsall, Sandwell and Staffordshire were contacted asking for details of their Christmas concerts.

And all but one that replied includes a traditional nativity as part of it – albeit some with a more modern take featuring a striking and disillusioned Father Christmas, angels learning of the birth of Christ from a newspaper and stories told from the perspective of a sheep.

Spaceman

According to Netmums, just a third of UK schools now put on the traditional nativity play.

The survey found aliens, recycling bins, a Lord Sugar-style 'Lord Christmas', Elvis, footballers, a lobster, a napkin, carrots, sprouts, a pumpkin and a spaceman instead.

Around 47 per cent offer an 'updated nativity' and one in eight have dropped the Christian references.

That is not the case in the Black Country and Staffordshire, although some schools tell different versions of the nativity, including one or two that do it from the perspective of the angels or even from the perspective of the sheep. Hey Ewe is one such play, being put on by Cannock's Chadsmoor Community Infants and Nursery school.

Children at Villiers Primary, Bilston, in their nativity play. Head Duncan Cocker said he was surprised by the Netmums polls results

According to the website Out Of The Ark, where the plays are sold, it is 'a straightforward but original nativity play told from the perspective of a curious sheep'.

Duncan Cocker, headteacher at Villiers Primary School in Bilston, was surprised by the survey results.

He said: "I did wonder when I saw the figure about one third doing the nativity whether that meant it was only a nativity they put on with nothing else.

"Our reception Christmas production is entitled The Bossy Fairy. The story highlights the true spirit of Christmas and also works in the retelling of the nativity through our children's marvellous acting, singing and dancing skills. All 80 children were involved in this wonderful performance."

The nativity was very much the focus at SS Mary and John's Catholic Primary Academy in Wolverhampton.

Principal Joanne Hanslip said: "We will be performing two nativity plays; one which is a modern nativity play script telling the traditional nativity story; and our second which is the traditional nativity story accompanied by traditional and modern carols and interspersed with readings from the Bible."

Bilston's Wilkinson Primary School is involving all 427 children in performances in the new school hall, built following a devastating fire in 2011.

Two groups of children will perform nativity stories while the older children are putting on Cinderella, family liaison officer Carol Duffield revealed.

Claregate Primary School is also doing nativity plays and carols.

Headteacher Mick Murphy said: "The children at Claregate are performing Christmas songs for parents of nursery children, an early years nativity, a Key Stage One nativity and the school choir perform a Christmas carol concert.

"We also have a visit from Santa and the parents and teachers association pay for a Christmas pantomime for years one to six and entertainment for nursery and reception children."

St Luke's Primary School in Blakenhall is doing a performance called Prickly Hay which is a musical based on the nativity.

Children in years three to six are participating in an evening Christmas Concert where the children sing traditional carols and Christmas songs, read poems and readings from the bible which are all based on the nativity. Russells Hall Primary School is doing traditional nativities.

And Anne Elledge from Emmanuel School, Walsall, said children had plenty of tradition in their plays too.

She said: "We are staging a Christmas play, involving all classes. It is based around the Russian traditional tale of Baboushka, who hosted the wise men on their journey to Bethlehem.

"They invited her to travel with them, but she had too much to do to clean her house, so said she would catch them up later. But she was too late, so still searches for the Christchild, and when she sees a baby, leaves a toy, just in case.

"As part of the production we will do a traditional stable scene, there will be a snowflake dance, Russian folk dance, cleaning 'stomp,' and of course some songs.

"Quite separate from the play, we also take Christmas out into the community. The key stage two classes sing carols at Walsall Centre for the Blind, key stage one do a little performance for the Afro-Caribbean Community Association lunch club for elderly people, and the choir sing carols at a care home."

Topics

Netherton Primary School staged two traditional nativities – one in school and one at a church. But headteacher Andrew Rushton said there was another aspect to this year's Christmas concert. He said: "We are also holding a First World War concert, following this term's topics which have all been based on the Great War."

St James Primary School in Oldbury is putting on A Wriggly Nativity, which is designed for children to be able to move about while singing instead of sitting still.

Sacred Heart Primary in Tipton is putting on a nativity but also doing Aladdin as a Christmas pantomime.

None of the schools who responded to the E&S said they were removing the Christian references.

But Netmums said its survey of 2,000 parents across the country had found cases where school Christmas plays incorporated references to the Muslim festival Eid, the Jewish Hanukkah or Hindu Diwali.

Siobhan Freegard co-founder of Netmums, said: "Do they know it's Christmas? At some schools, it seems not.

"While the UK is a diverse and multicultural society and it's right children learn about all religions and cultures, many parents feel the traditional nativity is being pushed aside."

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Chuckle time at next year's panto

THIS year's Grand pantomime has only just took to the boards but already next year's festive stars have been revealed.

The Chuckle Brothers will star in 2015 festive season's Grand Theatre pantomime, returning to the theatre for their first Wolverhampton panto in 22 years. They will star in Peter Pan, which kicks off a six-week run on December 12 next year.

This year's panto — Cinderella — had raked in £1 million before the show opened on Saturday.

The last panto appearance by the Chuckle Brothers at the Grand was Snow White and the Seven Dwarves with Linda Lusardi. Tickets for next year's panto go on sale today (Thursday).

Festive matinees at Symphony Hall

CHRISTMAS week will see afternoon festive concerts being held at Birmingham Symphony Hall.

On Monday, December 22, Jonathan Cohen hosts a Christmas Carol Singalong from 2.30 featuring special guest Alison Jiear, the London Concert Chorus and London Concert Orchestra. On Christmas Eve, from 2.30, the London Concert Orchestra are joined by Birmingham Choral Union and Staffordshire Children's Choir, plus guest tenor Ed Lyon, for The Glory of Christmas with music from Rutter, Handel, Schubert and Bach. See www.thsh.co.uk or call 0121 345 0603.

Seann to be wild with comic as long as he goes to right city

Cinders already a success

PANTO season is with us once again and this year at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre it's Cinderella, which is set to beat box office records.

The show stars camp comic Julian Clary, Hollyoaks' Joe Tracini, former X Factor finalist Niki Evans and 19-year-old debutant Alice Baker as Cinders.

As he prepared for his role as Dandini, Clary explained his love of panto: "It is a true art form, something that is very different from anything else I do but at the same time one of the most enjoyable. For it to work the cast has to really feed off each other and bring the audience into play. You always get so many unexpected things happening in the panto world."

Grand Theatre chief executive Peter Cutchie said audiences could expect to see 'a truly spectacular family pantomime'. It runs until January 18

Stars of the Grand panto Julian Clary, Alice Baker as Cinderella and Joe Tracini

IT'S all happening for comedian Seann Walsh at the minute.

The floppy-haired funnyman is on tour with a date to come in Wolverhampton. His debut DVD Seann To Be Wild has been released and two more series of the comedy panel show Virtually Famous – on which he is a captain – have been recommissioned.

All this on top of a sell-out run at the Edinburgh fringe. He really is living the dream.

"Stand-up was what I always wanted to do, since watching the likes of Whose Line Is It Anyway? as kid," said Walsh. It has earned him a Leicester Mercury Comedian of the Year Award, a Chortle Best Breakthrough Act nominee and an award as Best Compere.

Comedian Seann Walsh

Wulfrun

With support from Mark Simmons, the comic says he is enjoying the tour so far, entitled Seann Walsh:28, ahead of a date at Wolverhampton's Wulfrun Hall on Thursday, December 18.

He promises this time he will turn up – and at the right venue, too. Recently Walsh was forced to call off a show, and apologise, when he arrived in Hereford instead of Hertford.

And, the last time in Wolverhampton, he says he was too ill to perform, though soldiered on regardless.

"I had to sit down the whole time, I shouldn't really have been there," he said. "So if anyone saw that gig, it wasn't really me."

Offstage, Walsh is trying to add to his acting credits. He appeared in The Bill in 2007 and in the sit-com Big Bad World.

He writes, alongside his friend Henry Packer, but is happy enough to make a living from making people laugh, particularly as, in his words: 'I don't really work too hard'.

Tickets for the Wulfrun Hall gig, which starts at 8pm, are available on 0870 3207000 or at www.wolvescivic.co.uk website.

Slade party night among top gigs

THE Fab(ricated) Four come to Wolverhampton tomorrow night (Friday) when the Bootleg Beatles play the Civic Hall.

On the same night, next door at the Wulfrun, Chrissie Hynde of The Pretenders is in concert, after this year proving she's still a force to be reckoned with on acclaimed solo album Stockholm.

Expect a raucous night with Buster Bloodvesell and co when Bad Manners play the Robin 2 in Bilston tonight (Thursday). Guitar legend Michael Schenker plays the Robin 2 on Tuesday and then former Wyre Forest rock 'n' roller Mike Sanchez brings his Portions to Bilston on Wednesday. Then next Thursday Dave Hill and Don Powell's Slade have a Xmas party.

Comedy central at the Civic halls

THERE'S festive fun in store with a feast of comedy in the run up to Christmas. Wolverhampton is comedy central, starting tonight (Thursday) when Omid Djalili brings his Iranalamadingdong to the Civic Hall. He is at the Symphony Hall tomorrow.

Jimmy Carr's Funny Business tour is at the Civic on Saturday and comedy veteran Ken Dodd performs Sunday. Lee Mack has sold out Tuesday and Wednesday nights at the Civic. Seann Walsh is at the Wulfrun next Thursday (see main article) and Roy Chubby Brown will be rude and crude at the Civic next Friday. Call 0870 320 7000.

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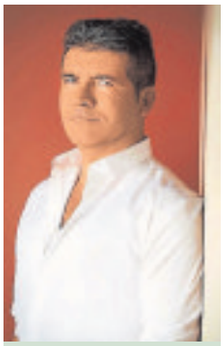

Simon Cowell

The X Factor (ITV, 8.30pm)
This is it then – the first stage of the 2014 sing-off when we see who has the right stuff to walk away with the prize money. Not that winning the show matters that much of course; even getting through to this stage of the game can be such a massive boost to any aspiring TV presenter or reality star looking for a spot in the Big Brother house; next year's I'm A Celebrity... or even, dare we say it, a pop career of their own. As the judges repeatedly reminded us the other week, "Literally anything can happen". So, as the remaining acts battle it out in part one of the final, settle back and enjoy as the lucky few attempt to hold their nerve and sing for their lives. Your host is Dermot O'Leary, while Simon Cowell, Cheryl, Mel B and Louis Walsh will be passing judgement.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** James Martin: Home Comforts. **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.50** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** Gymnastics World Cup. **3.00** Cycling: Track World Cup. **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** A Question of Sport. (R) **5.40** BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

6.00 Pointless Celebrities. Alexander Armstrong quizzes eight chart-topping singers – Paul Young and Carol Decker, Sheila Ferguson and Dana, Paul Heaton and Jacqui Abbott and Keith Duffy and Mikey Graham.

6.50 Strictly Come Dancing. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman present the semi-final of the ballroom battle, in which the remaining five couples will be hoping to pull off their best performances yet as they tackle two dances each. Judges Len Goodman, Bruno Tonioli, Craig Revel Horwood and Darcey Bussell give their verdicts on the routines, but the all-important votes from the viewers decide who will waltz into next week's final and compete for the glitterball trophy. The results are tomorrow at 7.20pm.

8.25 Atlantis. As the gang is chased round an ancient burial ground by an army of undead flesh-eaters, and Jason battles for his life within the caves.

9.10 Casualty. A ceiling collapse at the cathedral leaves several of the congregation trapped, Lofty helps a patient who thinks he is Jesus and Zoe catches Max spying on her and Dylan.

10.00 The National Lottery Live. Jenni Falconer is joined by supergroup McBusted as she reveals the numbers for the Lotto and Thunderball draws.

10.10 BBC News; Weather.

10.30 Match of the Day. Dan Walker presents highlights of the latest Premier League clashes, including Chelsea v Hull City at Stamford Bridge and Arsenal v Newcastle United at the Emirates Stadium; National Lottery Update.

11.55 The Football League Show. Manish Bhasin presents highlights and all the goals from the latest fixtures in the Championship, League One and League Two.

1.15 Film: Black Eagle. (1988) **2.50** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.55** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 CBBC. **11.00** The Blue Planet. (R) **12.00** James Martin's Food Map of Britain. (R) **12.20** Rick Stein's Far Eastern Odyssey. (R) **1.20** The Rockford Files. (R) **2.05 Film:** Funny Girl. (1968) Musical biopic of Fanny Brice, starring Barbra Streisand. **4.30** Andrew Marr's The Making of Modern Britain. (R) **5.30** Restoring England's Heritage.

6.00 Secrets of the Castle with Ruth, Peter and Tom. Ruth Goodman, Peter Ginn and Tom Pinfold examine the ways in which every aspect of the construction of a castle required the stonemasons, blacksmiths and carpenters to co-ordinate their efforts – from making and sharpening tools, to processing wood, and securing timber scaffolding on the castle walls. Peter and Tom help fix the Guedelon water mill, which is having major teething problems, and the team follows the progress of the construction of a wooden walkway connecting the chapel tower with the Great Hall. (R)

7.00 Flog It! Adam Partridge and Catherine Southon value items brought into the town hall in Todmorden, West Yorkshire, while Paul Martin visits the Bronte Parsonage Museum in Haworth.

8.00 Perry and Croft: Made in Britain. The concluding episode of the celebration of writing duo David Croft and Jimmy Perry, examines how the duo's comedies each encapsulated the end of an era. Last in the series.

8.30 Dad's Army. Jonesy's van runs out of petrol and the platoon is forced to spend the night in a spooky deserted house, where the men's imaginations soon run wild. (R)

9.00 QI XL. Extended edition. Sara Pascoe, Jack Whitehall, Adam Hills and Alan Davies attempt to answer host Stephen Fry's range of fiendish questions.

9.45 Tomorrow's Worlds: The Unearthly History of Science Fiction. Dominic Sandbrook examines the use of time travel in the genre, from The Time Machine to Doctor Who. With David Tennant, Christopher Lloyd and Scott Bakula. Last in the series.

10.45 Film: Let Me In. (2010) Horror remake, starring Chloe Grace Moretz and Kodi Smit-McPhee.

12.35 Film: Forbidden Planet. (1956) **2.10** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.05** Canimals. (R) **7.10** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.40** Text Santa: Little Helpers. (R) **7.45** Hulk and the Agents of Smash. **8.10** Text Santa: Little Helpers. (R) **8.15** Horrid Henry. **8.30** The Munch Box. **9.25** Dinner Date. (R) **10.20** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.15** ITV News; Weather. **11.20** Storage Hoarders. (R) **12.20 Film:** Columbo: Fade in to Murder. (1976) Crime drama, starring Peter Falk. **1.55 Film:** Mannequin. (1987) Fantasy comedy, starring Andrew McCarthy. **3.50 Film:** Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban. (2004) Fantasy adventure, starring Daniel Radcliffe.

6.30 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.40 ITV News; Weather.

6.55 New You've Been Framed!

7.25 The Chase: Christmas Special. Bradley Walsh hosts a festive edition with actors Steve Pemberton and Ben Miller, Coronation Street's Paula Lane (Kylie) and Educating Yorkshire's Mr Burton. Last in the series.

8.30 The X Factor. They wowed the judges at the double auditions, survived the six-chair challenge and made it through nine weeks of live studio rounds. Now, the three remaining acts head to Wembley Arena to battle it out in the first part of the final. Viewers can also expect performances by some of the biggest names in the charts across the two shows, including Madonna if rumours are to believed. At the end of the programme, Dermot O'Leary announces the results of the public vote and the contestant in third place is eliminated. Concludes tomorrow at 8pm.

10.35 The Jonathan Ross Show. With former X Factor judge Tulisa Contostavlos, actor and comedian James Corden, Mad Men star Jon Hamm, Celebrity Juice host Keith Lemon and music by singer-songwriter Paloma Faith.

11.40 ITV News; Weather.

11.55 Film: Balls of Fury. (2007) The FBI recruits a washed-up former ping-pong champion to infiltrate an underground tournament run by a criminal mastermind. Comedy, starring Dan Fogler.

1.30 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.40** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 NFL: Rush Zone. **6.35** Trans World Sport. **7.30** Survival of the Fittest. **7.55** The Morning Line. **9.00** Weekend Kitchen. **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.00** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Cheltenham and Doncaster. **3.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.55** Channel 4 News.

6.00 100 Greatest Toys with Jonathan Ross. A countdown of the nation's favourite games, gadgets and playthings, as decided by a Channel 4 online poll. Inventors and toy-makers tell the inside stories of their creations and successes – including Action Man, Yahtzee, Barbie and Trivial Pursuit – while the children of yesteryear, namely today's celebrities, authors, actors and journalists, take a nostalgic look back at the toys they loved. Also revealed is the inspiration behind the design of the Raleigh Chopper, the unlikely individual responsible for the creation of one of the world's toughest action figures, and why the Vietnam War almost brought Britain's Matchbox car range to an end. (R)

9.00 Film: Hope Springs. (2012) Premiere. A middle-aged married woman feels her long-standing relationship with her unadventurous husband is becoming stale. When she hears of a marriage counsellor offering therapy sessions in his remote retreat, she persuades her reluctant spouse to join her for a week with the doctor rediscovering why they fell in love in the first place. Romantic comedy, with Meryl Streep, Tommy Lee Jones and Steve Carell.

11.00 Film: An Officer and a Gentleman. (1982) A Navy recruit has an uneasy romance with a factory worker and is pushed to his limits by a tough sergeant. Romantic drama, starring Richard Gere, Debra Winger and Louis Gossett Jr.

1.20 Film: Q&A. (1990) Thriller, with Nick Nolte, Timothy Hutton and Armand Assante. **3.35** Hollyoaks. Omnibus. Ste returns to the village. (R) **5.45** NFL: Rush Zone. Animation about a young American football fan.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.45** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.20** Access. **10.30** World Strongman Championship. (R) **11.25 Film:** Ice Age: The Meltdown. (2006) **1.10 Film:** The Christmas Bunny. (2010) Premiere. Family drama, starring Sophie Bolen. **2.55 Film:** Angels and Ornaments. (2014) Premiere. Romantic fantasy, starring Jessalyn Gilsig. **4.40 Film:** Mrs Miracle 2: Miracle in Manhattan. (2010) Family drama sequel, starring Doris Roberts.

6.30 Film: Mistletoe Over Manhattan. (2011) Santa Claus's wife goes to New York to perform a Christmas miracle and give her husband fresh inspiration. She befriends a cop who is in the middle of a divorce and offers to become a nanny to his children. She then discovers he still loves his wife, and tries to find a way to bring them back together. Seasonal fantasy, starring Tricia Helfer and Greg Bryk.

8.15 My Crazy Christmas Obsession. Documentary following four American households who take festive decorations to the extreme, spending huge amounts of money, time and energy on their properties to bring Christmas cheer to their neighbourhoods. In Oklahoma, Shay has 168 trees of all shapes and sizes in her home, festooned with more than 50,000 ornaments and 100,000 fairy lights. (R)

9.05 5 News Weekend.

9.10 TV's 50 Greatest Magic Tricks. TV illusionists have been sawing ladies in half, catching bullets between their teeth, reading minds and performing feats of escapology for decades. Channel 5 counts down the best, including the astonishing set-pieces of Penn and Teller, the mind-bending of Derren Brown and the street magic of David Blaine. It features spectacular illusions, such as making the Statue of Liberty disappear, intimate card tricks and the lighter side of the business, thanks to the inclusion of comedy great Tommy Cooper. Paul Daniels and Dynamo also appear in this magic compendium, with contributions from Joe Pasquale, Dick and Dom, and Stephen Mulhern. (R)

12.05 SuperCasino. **3.10** Gotham. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.15** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Doctor Who **8.00** Top Gear **9.10** Sherlock **10.40** Live at the Apollo **11.10** Family Guy **12.55** American Dad! **1.20** Some Girls **1.45** Sweat the Small Stuff **2.15** Live at the Apollo **2.45** In Deep **3.00** How Safe Are My Drugs? **4.00** Close

BBC Four
7.00 Ice Age Giants **8.00** Sex and Sensibility: The Allure of Art Nouveau **9.00** Inspector Montalbano **10.50** The Richest Songs in the World **12.20** Sounds of the Sixties **1.20** Top of the Pops: 1979 **1.55** Ice Age Giants **2.55** Sex and Sensibility: The Allure of Art Nouveau **3.55** Close

ITV2
11.20 The Cube: Celebrity Special **12.20** You've Been Framed! **12.50 Film:** Twins (1988) **3.00 Film:** Secret Santa (2003) **4.50** You've Been Framed at Christmas! **7.00 Film:** Pearl Harbor (2001) **10.35** The Xtra Factor **11.35** Celebrity Juice: Christmas Special **12.35** The X Factor **2.35** Nicole Scherzinger: The Hot Desk **2.45** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
1.00 A Touch of Frost **3.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Rosemary & Thyme **8.00** Doc Martin **9.00** Foyle's War **11.00** A Touch of Frost **1.00** Bomb Girls **1.50** Movies Now **2.00** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.25 Alias Smith and Jones **12.30 Film:** Paths of Glory (1957) **2.20 Film:** Captain Newman MD (1964) **5.00** Live FIA Formula E Championship. The Punta del Este ePrix. **7.30 Film:** Licence to Kill (1989) **10.15 Film:** Scarface (1983) **1.35** Alias Smith and Jones **2.40** Movies Now **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.00 Melissa & Joey **1.00 Film:** First Daughter (2004) **3.15** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **3.30** Made in Chelsea **4.35** Melissa & Joey **5.30** How I Met Your Mother **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** The Mechanic (2011) **10.50** Rude Tube **11.55** The Inbetweeners **1.05** The Cleveland Show **3.15** Rules of Engagement **4.00** Happy Endings **4.45** The 100

Film4
11.00 Hills of Home (1948) **1.00** Runaway Bride (1999) **3.20** Silent Running (1972) **5.10** Big (1988) **7.15** Post Grad (2009) **9.00** Safe House (2012) **11.15** Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance (2011) **1.05** Working Girl (1988) **3.25** Close

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CHOICE

Gary Lineker

Sports Personality of the Year 2014 (BBC1, 8pm)

If English football supporters can put aside for a second their disappointment over the failure of Roy Hodgson's men to make their mark in Brazil during the summer, it's been another remarkable year for British sport. Rory McIlroy won two of golf's major tournaments, Lizzy Yarnold secured gold at the Winter Olympics and Glasgow hosted the Commonwealth Games, at which Jo Pavey won a bronze medal in the 5,000m before being crowned the 10,000m champion at the European Championships. Cameras return to Glasgow for the Sports Personality of the Year event. Any of those could lift the trophy, but the smart money is probably on Lewis Hamilton following his second Formula One championship title.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Fern Britton Meets Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson. **11.00** Sunday Politics. **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. With Mark Chapman and the Match of the Day team. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. **2.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.15** Lifeline. **4.25** Songs of Praise. **5.00** Pointless Celebrities. (R) **5.50** BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

6.20 Countryfile. The team is in the Clwydian range in north Wales, where Ellie Harrison meets schoolchildren running their own chicken farm and Matt Baker joins a conservation team in the uplands. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.

7.20 Strictly Come Dancing: The Results. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman present as five become four, determining the line-up for next week's final, and there is a performance by Paloma Faith.

8.00 Sports Personality of the Year 2014. Gary Lineker, Gabby Logan and Clare Balding present this year's ceremony live from the Hydro Arena in Glasgow, where the successor to Andy Murray will be crowned. The contenders for the main prize include Rory McIlroy, who dominated the golfing scene and won two of the year's four Majors, Lewis Hamilton, whose victories on the way to title glory saw him surpass Nigel Mansell as the British driver to have won the most Formula 1 races, and Winter Olympic champion Lizzy Yarnold, who claimed gold in the skeleton. The other nominees are Gareth Bale, Max Whitlock, Adam Peaty, Carl Froch, Charlotte Dujardin, Jo Pavey, plus Paralympic skier Kelly Gallagher and guide Charlotte Evans. Subsequent programmes subject to change.

10.20 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

10.45 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action, including Manchester United v Liverpool and Swansea City v Tottenham Hotspur.

11.45 The Apprentice. (R)

12.45 Film: It's a Wonderful Afterlife. (2010) **2.20** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.25** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Animal Park. (R) **6.30** Match of the Day at 50. (R) **7.35** Life in a Cottage Garden with Carol Klein. (R) **8.05** Countryfile. (R) **9.00** The Football League Show. (R) **10.20** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.50** Rick Stein's Christmas Special. (R) **12.50** James Martin's Food Map of Britain. (R) **1.00** The Rockford Files. (R) **1.50 Film:** Funny Lady. (1975) Musical comedy sequel, starring Barbra Streisand. **4.05 Film:** Emma. (1996) Jane Austen drama, starring Gwyneth Paltrow.

6.00 Sports Personality of the Year at 60. Gary Lineker presents a look at the history of the ceremony, which has become a sports and broadcasting institution since first being held in 1954. Former winners including Steve Redgrave, Princess Anne and Sebastian Coe recall their memories of the show, Des Lynam discusses his years presenting the awards and Sue Barker is among the contributors remembering the special awards given to the likes of Muhammad Ali and Bobby Robson. (R)

7.00 James May's Toy Stories: Flight Club. The Top Gear presenter investigates the enduring appeal of the model aeroplane and sets out to break the British record for the longest flight by a toy glider. (R)

8.00 Film: What Women Want. (2000) A freak accident gives a womanising executive the ability to hear the thoughts of the opposite sex. Embittered after losing out on promotion to a female colleague, he uses his new-found talent to exact revenge – but the insight it provides ultimately brings out an unexpected sensitive side. Romantic comedy, starring Mel Gibson, Helen Hunt, with Marisa Tomei, Alan Alda and Bette Midler.

10.00 Russell Howard's Good News. The comedian offers his perspective on stories dominating the media. (R)

10.30 Film: Mrs Henderson Presents. (2005) A widow invests her fortune in an abandoned London theatre and defies censorship laws to stage a controversial nude revue. Fact-based comedy drama, with Judi Dench and Bob Hoskins.

12.10 Film: A Walk to Remember. (2002) **1.45** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **2.45** Holby City. (R) **3.45** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.05** Caninimals. (R) **7.10** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.40** Text Santa: Little Helpers. (R) **7.45** Ultimate Spider-Man. **8.10** Text Santa: Little Helpers. (R) **8.15** Horrid Henry. **8.30** Big Time Rush. **9.00** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Dickinson's Real Deal. (R) **10.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.25** ITV News; Weather. **11.30 Film:** Problem Child. (1990) Comedy, starring John Ritter. **1.05** Tipping Point. (R) **2.05** You've Been Framed! (R) **2.35** The X Factor. (R) **4.40 Film:** Death Becomes Her. (1992) Black comedy fantasy, starring Goldie Hawn and Meryl Streep.

6.35 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.45 ITV News; Weather.

7.00 Catchphrase Christmas Special. Former glamour model Katie Price, actor-presenter Warwick Davis and panto king Christopher Biggins line up to "see it and say it" as they try to guess the familiar phrases hidden in festive-themed animated clues and win thousands of pounds for their chosen charities. Stephen Mulhern hosts.

8.00 The X Factor Results. With part one of the final behind them, this is the last chance for the two remaining acts to impress the public in the race to become this year's X Factor winner. The judges offer their comments as usual, but the result is entirely in viewers' hands, and at the end of the programme, Dermot O'Leary reveals which of these aspiring pop stars will walk away with the prize of a record deal. There are also performances by more world-famous acts, sending the show out on a high. Last in the series.

10.05 Film: The Holiday. (2006) Two single women from opposite sides of the Atlantic find love after they swap houses over Christmas. Romantic comedy, with Cameron Diaz and Kate Winslet, Jack Black and Jude Law. Continues after the News.

11.05 ITV News; Weather.

11.20 Film: The Holiday. (2006) Concluded.

12.45 The Store. Home shopping. **2.30** Motorsport UK. **3.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **4.05** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 NFL: The American Football Show. (R) **7.10** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **7.35** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Jamie's Comfort Food. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.25** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30** The Simpsons. (R) **3.00 Film:** 10 Things I Hate About You. (1999) Comedy, starring Heath Ledger and Julia Stiles. **5.00 Film:** Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian. (2009) Fantasy comedy sequel, starring Ben Stiller.

7.05 Channel 4 News.

7.30 Britain's Wildest Weather 2014. This year, the nation has been hit by tornados, floods, hurricanes and ferocious storms, as well as the chilliest August in more than two decades, but the public has also enjoyed the hottest Halloween on record. This documentary presents eyewitness footage of an unpredictable 12 months, featuring rescues at sea, homes struck by lightning, an escape for 500 cows, and sea foam that engulfs a bus. There's also a look at the science behind these wild weather events and why there may be worse to come.

9.00 Homeland. The security breach at the embassy has a number of far-reaching consequences as the fourth series of the CIA thriller continues. Claire Danes, Rupert Friend and Mandy Patinkin star.

10.00 Film: Insidious. (2010) A family driven from their house by a haunting discover the spirits have followed them to their new home and put their son into a coma. Horror, with Patrick Wilson and Rose Byrne.

12.00 Alan Carr: Chatty Man. The host is joined by Stephen Fry and Clare Balding, talking about their new books, and Micky Flanagan, discussing his latest DVD. Plus, Gorgon City perform with Jennifer Hudson. (R) **1.00** American Football Live. Philadelphia Eagles v Dallas Cowboys (Kick-off 1.30am). Coverage of the week 15 fixture from Lincoln Financial Field, where the NFC East rivals face each other. **4.45** NFL: Rush Zone. Animation about a young American football fan who must protect shards of a power source called The Core, which is hidden in various NFL stadiums. **5.10** Face the Clock. (R) **5.35** Countdown. Words-and-numbers game, with Dictionary Corner guest Arlene Phillips. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.30** Pip Ahoy! (R) **6.40** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.55** Chloe's Closet. (R) **7.05** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.10** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.25** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.35** Paw Patrol. **7.50** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **8.00** Little Princess. (R) **8.10** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.20** Wanda and the Alien. **8.35** Mio Mao. (R) **8.40** Zack and Quack. **8.50** Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Access. (R) **10.45** Police Interceptors. (R) **11.45** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.40 Film:** Dear Secret Santa. (2013) Premiere. Drama, starring Tatyana Ali. **2.30 Film:** Deck the Halls. (2006) Christmas comedy, starring Danny DeVito and Matthew Broderick. **4.20 Film:** Paper Angels. (2014) Premiere. Festive drama, starring Josie Bissett.

6.15 Film: A Christmas Kiss. (2011) Premiere. An aspiring designer impulsively kisses a man she meets in a lift, only to discover he is her boss's boyfriend. She is given the task of decorating his house for a lavish Christmas party, but begins to fall in love with him – while he does not remember their previous encounter. Romantic drama, with Laura Breckenridge, Brendan Fehr and Elisabeth Rohm.

8.00 The Abba Years. Documentary exploring the success of the Swedish group, featuring interviews with the band members and footage of concerts and stage shows. Filmed in Sweden and London, the programme explores the flamboyant outfits, chart-topping music, successful spin-offs, marriages and break-ups. (R)

9.00 Michael Buble's Christmas Special. The Grammy-winning Canadian crooner performs classic festive songs. (R)

9.55 5 News Weekend.

10.00 Britain's Favourite Christmas Songs. A countdown of songs guaranteed to make any Christmas party go with a swing, including classics by the Jackson 5, Jona Lewie, Band Aid, Mud, the Pogues and Kirsty MacColl and Slade. (R)

1.00 Abba: In Concert. (R) **2.00** SuperCasino. **3.10** World Strongman Championship. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.15** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Great TV Mistakes **7.30** Doctor Who: The Ultimate Guide **7.40** Doctor Who: The Day of the Doctor **9.00** Top Gear: Polar Challenge **10.00** Family Guy **10.45** American Dad! **11.30** Some Girls **12.00** Sweat the Small Stuff **12.30** How Safe Are My Drugs? **1.30** The Revolution Will Be Televised **2.00** Some Girls

BBC Four

7.00 The Fairytale Castles of King Ludwig II with Dan Cruickshank **8.00** Rome: A History of the Eternal City **9.00** Pompeii: The Mystery of the People Frozen in Time **10.00** Pillars of Creation – The Sky at Night **10.30** Queen: Days of Our Lives **12.30** Great American Rock Anthems: Turn It Up to 11 **1.30** Sounds of the Eighties **2.00** Natural World Special: Miracle in the Marshes of Iraq

ITV2

11.00 The X Factor **1.10** The Xtra Factor **2.10** Kylie Minogue: The Hot Desk **2.25 Film:** Santa Baby (2006) **4.15 Film:** Beethoven's Christmas Adventure (2011) **6.00 Film:** The Polar Express (2004) **8.00** Scorpion **9.00** Educating Joey Essex: Winter Essex-Pedition **10.00** The Xtra Factor **11.00** Through the Christmas Keyhole **12.05 Film:** American Pie Presents: The Naked Mile (2006) **2.10** The Vampire Diaries

ITV3

11.35 A Touch of Frost **1.35** Rosemary & Thyme **2.40** Agatha Christie's Marple **4.50 Film:** Columbo: Forgotten Lady (1975) **6.50** Inspector Morse **9.00** Lewis **11.00** Cracker **1.15 Film:** The Count of Monte Cristo (2002)

ITV4

11.35 Film: Captain Newman MD (1964) **2.10 Film:** Ice Cold in Alex (1958) **4.50 Film:** The Battle of Midway (1976) **7.30** Storage Wars **9.00 Film:** Doom (2005) **11.05 Film:** Species: The Awakening (2007) **1.10** River Monsters **2.10** Nitro Circus **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen

E4

12.30 Made in Chelsea **1.30 Film:** Step Up 3 (2010) **3.50** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **4.00** Melissa & Joey **5.00** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **10.00** The Inbetweeners **11.10** Bad Robots **11.40** How I Met Your Mother **1.35** Rules of Engagement **2.30** The Cleveland Show

Film4

11.00 Dragoon Wells Massacre (1957) **1.00** The First Wives Club (1996) **3.05** Anastasia (1997) **5.00** Honey, I Blew Up the Kid (1992) **6.45** Percy Jackson & the Lightning Thief (2010) **9.00** Good Will Hunting (1997) **11.25** Good Morning, Vietnam (1987) **1.50** Sweetgrass (2009)

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
The Real St Nick, Channel 5, 2pm
An injured man is brought into hospital dressed as Father Christmas, and when he comes round, he claims to really be Santa, landing himself in the psychiatric ward. Romantic comedy, with Torrey DeVitto and Callard Harris. (2012)

TUESDAY
Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, ITV, 7.30pm
The young wizard struggles to convince his fellow sorcerers that the evil Lord Voldemort has returned to life. Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson, Rupert Grint, Gary Oldman, Michael Gambon and Alan Rickman. (2007)

Waterworld, ITV, 10.40pm
In the future, environmental disasters have left the planet flooded. A web-footed mutant mariner helps a woman and an orphan girl search for a mythical haven of dry land – but in the process has to fend off a villainous crew of nicotine-addicted pirates. Sci-fi adventure, starring Kevin Costner, Dennis Hopper, Jeanne Tripplehorn and Rick Aviles. (1995)

Waterworld, Tuesday, ITV, 10.40pm

WEDNESDAY
The Bandit of Sherwood Forest, Channel 4, 2.35am
The son of Robin Hood reunites his father's merry men to carry out a rescue mission at the request of the Queen Mother. Swashbuckling adventure, starring Cornel Wilde and Anita Louise. (1946)

THURSDAY
Mr St Nick, Channel 5, 11.40am
Father Christmas decides it is time to hang up his hat and hand the reins of the family business over to his son – who is less than enthusiastic about donning the famed red suit, throwing the future of the festive season into doubt. Festive comedy, starring Kelsey Grammer, Charles Durning and Elaine Hendrix. (2002)

FRIDAY
Shoot 'Em Up, Channel 5, 10.50pm
A gun-toting mysterious stranger delivers a baby, which he is forced to protect from a horde of heavily armed assassins. Enlisting the aid of a prostitute, he sets out to discover why the child has been marked for death. Action adventure, starring Clive Owen, Paul Giamatti and Monica Bellucci. (2007)

PICK OF THE WEEK

Jonathan is dishing out the gags and the gongs

Jonathan Ross fronts the 25th annual British Comedy Awards, and as you may have guessed, there's a wealth of comedic talent up for the assorted plaudits.

Among them is Joe Wilkinson, who's in the running with Matt Berry, Nick Helm and Harry Peacock for Best Comedy Breakthrough Artist.

The hirsute funnyman has become a TV regular over the last couple of years, popping up in sublime sitcom Him & Her, and assorted panel games, including Have I Got News For You and 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown (both of which are up for Best Comedy Panel Programme).

But how did the Kent-born actor and comic make the leap from graphic designer to professional rib-tickler?

"I kind of enjoyed it (graphic design), but my heart was elsewhere," he explains. "I'd like to say that I orchestrated it, and it was all a big plan, but I wasn't really."

Joe had wanted to try his hand at comedy, but thought it was a club reserved for other people, until one fateful evening.

"My local pub was putting on open mic stand-up nights, so I went on and thought maybe I'll try but I won't tell anyone, and it was genuinely to go, 'Right, I've done it. Like a bungee jump sort of thing,'"

After his routine, Joe was amazed when he was asked if he wanted to do it again in the coming weeks.

"I thought: 'Oh, I hadn't really thought about doing it again.' So I did that a few months later, and then someone else booked me and it just sort of kept going.

"People kept booking me and I have no recollection of my first gig. I'm almost certain it wasn't brilliant," he laughs. "So it sort of just carried on from there. I'd love to say I had my five-point plan. I'm still sort of winging it if I'm honest."

Back to the Awards, and given the fact Will Ferrell was worshipped at last year's bash, there's no surprise to find last year's Anchorman 2 in the running for Best Comedy Film.

However, in case you're wondering why your favourite show or film from late September 2014 onwards isn't in the running this year, there's a good reason: programmes or performances must have had their first transmission in the UK between September 24, 2013 and September 22, 2014 on terrestrial, cable, satellite or digital channels.

Special gongs include The Writers' Guild of Great Britain Award (WGGB); Outstanding Achievement in Comedy; Lifetime Achievement in Comedy (the Python team may be in the running given their O2 gigs), and The King/Queen of Comedy.

Aisling Bea recently proved to be a superb guest on Never Mind the Buzzcocks, but will she manage to eclipse the likes of Bridget Christie, Isy Suttie or (2013 winner) Nina Conti in the Best Female Television Comic stakes?

Viewers should expect the unexpected, the unplanned and the unruly as some of the nation's favourite stars pick up their awards

That remains to be seen, but one thing is for certain: as this year saw the passing of showbiz greats Robin Williams and Rik Mayall, there's bound to be a poignant moment as two of the best loved funnymen are remembered.

The British Comedy Awards 2014, Wednesday, Channel 4, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Bette Midler: One Night Only
ITV, 9pm
It's hard to believe that The Divine Miss M is a year shy of her 70th birthday – okay, so she's only just turned 69, we'll give her that – but in all this time in the limelight, she's never done a UK television special before. Until now. It's been 42 years since Midler released her debut album, so she's bound to have plenty of stories for us tonight, as she chats about her life and career. The Grammy Award-winner will also be performing her various hits, including Wind Beneath My Wings and From a Distance, as well as songs from her new album, It's the Girls, including a cover of The Ronettes' Be My Baby. The whole thing is hosted by Joanna Lumley.

Steph and Dom Meet Nigel Farage
Channel 4, 10pm
Steph and Dom Parker, owners of plush B&B The Salutation, have caused quite the stir on telly favourite Gogglebox. So what would happen if they were to come face to face with another of Britain's most opinionated personalities, UKIP's Nigel Farage? Wonder no more… This spin-off sees the Parkers joined by their local MP candidate, Farage, in a wine-fuelled evening, that's sure to leave him rather hot under the collar, thanks to all the questions they have got lined up for him.

TUESDAY
Black Mirror: White Christmas
Channel 4, 9pm
Charlie Brooker's dark drama series may seem like an odd choice to be given a Christmas special. However, there is a proud tradition of TV channels scaring us at Christmas, it's just that Brooker tends to do it via bleak visions of the future rather than ghost stories. This feature-length instalment brings us three yarns for the price of one, as in a remote, snowy outpost, charismatic Matt (Mad Men's Jon Hamm) and secretive Potter (Rafe Spall) swap tales about their lives on the outside world.

The Missing
BBC1, 9pm
Michael Palin's recent supernatural drama Remember Me may have been spooky, but some parents would probably argue that The Missing has been the most terrifying series of 2014. Poor Tony (James Nesbitt) only took his eyes of his five-year-old son for a split second in a crowded bar, but it was long enough for the youngster to disappear without a trace. Now, the investigation comes to an end, but will Tony, Emily and Julien finally get the answers they've been waiting for?

WEDNESDAY
Surprise Surprise
ITV, 8pm
Pop supergroup McBusted surprise one of their biggest fans with a performance on top of London's O2 arena, and former JLS member Marvin Humes makes a dream come true for an inspiring aid worker who came to the rescue of a Somerset village devastated by floods. Holly Willoughby presents.

THURSDAY
George Clarke's Amazing Christmas Spaces
Channel 4, 8pm
Architect George Clarke loves this series – it brings him into contact with some amazingly inventive souls who have dreamed up some mind-boggling projects, and usually on a budget. George rounds off the series with some builds with a Christmas theme. He's off to visit a 130-year-old tin church, one of the earliest takes on flat-pack construction in the country. His mate Will Hardie takes a tour of another chapel, although this one has been transformed into a luxury home. The guys then help the UK's only female ice carver create a winter wonderland ice bar in Liverpool before looking back at their favourite builds of the series over drinks in Joel Bird's Shed of the Year-winning construction.

Bette Midler: One Night Only, Monday, ITV, 9pm

FRIDAY
Text Santa
ITV, 8pm
The festive fundraising extravaganza returns, with the evening's presenting duos – Ant and Dec, Phillip Schofield and Christine Bleakley, and Paddy McGuinness and Alesha Dixon – joined by a host of famous faces to raise money for six deserving causes. Highlights include George Clooney making a surprise visit to Downton Abbey, the residents of Coronation Street appearing in a comedy sketch with a Text Santa twist, and Ant and Dec hosting a Yule Tucker Trial for an unsuspecting celebrity while serenaded by a choir of former jungle contestants. The Birds of a Feather stars also get involved, The Cube welcomes some unexpected visitors and there are appearances by the casts of Mr Selfridge and Emmerdale, plus plenty of live music throughout the show.

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Venue: Village Hotel, Castlegate Park, Birmingham Road, Dudley, DY1 4TB
Time: 9am until 4pm

To **Book** an appointment call now on:
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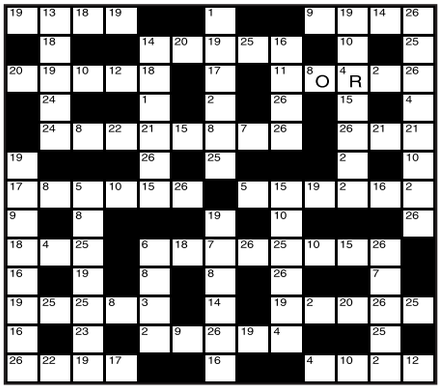
Axium Marketing Ltd, Office 420, Glenfield Business Park, Philips Road, Blackburn, BB1 5PF

BRAIN GYM No.303

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



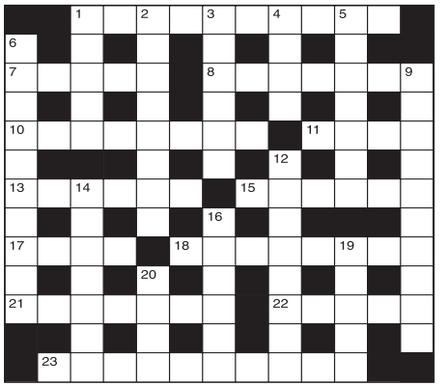
1	14
2	15
3	16
4 R	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8 O	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1 W	2 L	3 D	4 Z	5 S	6 X	7 Y	8 E	9 I	10 U	11 K	12 T	13 J
14 O	15 V	16 G	17 C	18 A	19 F	20 M	21 H	22 Q	23 B	24 N	25 R	26 P

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. The Sahara Express! (5,5)
7. Learner gets horribly sore, because he's been beaten (5)
8. French brass-hat sounds warlike (7)
10. Marks of sovereignty in various respects (8)
11. This is used for shooting slow-moving creature (4)
13. Furtively take one's leave of French settlement (6)
15. Robber gang is in front of it (6)
17 & 18Ac. A way of acquiring goods that sounds more expensive (4-8)
18. See 17 Across
21. One of the key players (7)
22. Curses a shot that has gone astray (5)
23. A storm seen to disturb a grampus (3-7)

Down

1. The social distinction of dramatic characters, we hear (5)
2. Record the hour, but make no progress (4,4)
3. Make flexible part of a gun carriage (6)
4. A combination of artist and engineer is seldom found (4)
5. Indulged in some inspiration? (7)
6. Union policy, maybe, shut down the store (6,4)
9. Lines in illuminated letters? (5,5)
12. Beware when the guard has gone forth! (5,3)
14. Concern about horse for slaughter (7)
16. Name the man who's very narrowly elected! (6)
19. See 20 Down
20 & 19Dn. He takes part on a set assignment (4,5)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Recover (10)
7. Mountain ash (5)
8. Case (7)
10. Awful (8)
11. Correct (4)
13. Impel (6)
15. Run (6)
17. Sole (4)
18. Unfounded (8)
21. Rescuer (7)
22. Lift (5)
23. Competent (10)

Down

1. Oarsman (5)
2. Persuade (8)
3. Preserve (6)
4. Gown (4)
5. Shoot (7)
6. Voluntary (10)
9. Done wrong (10)
12. Unworried (8)
14. Transfer (7)
16. Structure (6)
19. Throw out (5)
20. Be idle (4)

Sudoku

	5	4		6				
		7		2		4	9	
	8			5	9			
	7				6	2	1	
4			7		1			3
		6	5				4	
	3		6	9			2	
	2	1		7		5		9
						8	7	

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	3	2	9	4	6	8	7	5
7	9	6	1	8	5	3	4	2
8	4	5	2	7	3	1	9	6
3	7	9	8	5	2	4	6	1
5	1	4	7	6	9	2	3	8
2	6	8	3	1	4	9	5	7
6	5	3	4	2	8	7	1	9
9	2	1	5	3	7	6	8	4
4	8	7	6	9	1	5	2	3

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 6 Capital; 7 Share; 9 Act; 10 Cross-wind; 12 Charge-hands; 15 Cheval-glass; 17 Hair style; 19 For; 21 Beans; 22 Haricot. Down: 1 Catch; 2 Fig; 3 Fair; 4 Show cause; 5 Grenade; 8 As well; 11 Shivering; 13 Relate; 14 Phrases; 16 Donor; 18 Leaf; 20 Bid. QUICK - Across: 6 Proceed; 7 Salad; 9 Fee; 10 Enlighten; 12 Persevering; 15 Indifferent; 17 Architect; 19 Try; 21 Steer; 22 Penalty. Down: 1 Order; 2 Act; 3 Keen; 4 Gathering; 5 Pageant; 8 Silver; 11 Delighted; 13 Safety; 14 Untruth; 16 Irate; 18 Crew; 20 Raw.

Quiz

1. Which German Nazi was known as the Butcher of Lyon?
2. By which name do we know the aquatic rodent Castor fiber?
3. Which fictional hero was created by Baroness Orczy?
4. Whose convalescent visit gave Bognor its Regis?
5. Which fabric causes the lung disease byssinosis?
6. Which popular cricket commentator died in January 1994?
7. Who, in Greek mythology, was the father of Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto?
8. Which author wrote J'Accuse, which concerned the Dreyfus affair?
9. What relationship is Oliver Reed to director Carol Reed?
10. Which city contains the residential district Beverly Hills?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 76 years; 2 Post scriptum; 3 Everton; 4 William Burroughs; 5 Felicity Kendal; 6 Henrik Ibsen; 7 Jamaica; 8 Denis Healey; 9 Greece; 10 Leicestershire.

Niner: PITEOUSLY

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

1322 gives an animal,
57796 gives a bird,
5345678 gives a fish.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

star extra TRAVEL London Theatre Breaks

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This popular theatre package to the West End departs from Birmingham New Street, Shrewsbury, Stafford or Wolverhampton on the Friday morning returning on the Sunday afternoon/early evening.

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Take in a top West End show and have some free time in London for shopping and sightseeing.

For the Theatre Weekend with Dinner option see the matinee performance before heading to the hotel for an evening meal. The Saturday Night option includes a ticket for the show to see an evening performance.

Both breaks include a theatre ticket, overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel plus full English breakfast.

Pick-up points offered are Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

**The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details. Single rooms subject to availability – supplements apply.*

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For a theatre brochure please call the promotions team on (01902) 319999 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm), or go to expressandstar.com/starextratravel

Please read brochure/web page for full information plus terms and conditions

star extra TRAVEL

STAR EXTRA TRAVEL, the travel department of the Express & Star, offers a wide range of short breaks and holidays. For your security, our tour operators are members of ABTA – the Travel Association and hold an ATOL (Air Travel Organisers Licence) for holidays by air. Prices are per person (unless otherwise stated). Please note Star Extra Travel is unable to take bookings over the telephone. Please read brochures/web pages for full description plus terms and conditions. Dates subject to availability.

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Destinations are carefully selected with each holiday featuring a comprehensive itinerary ensuring travellers see the very best the country has to offer. These are further enchanced by experienced tour managers who accompany passengers throughout the whole trip.

Here are just three holidays taken from their 2015 brochure.

Rivera Travel – ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430

Pompeii, Capri and the Bay of Naples

Eight days various departure dates

PRICE FROM £809

Italy is a superb destination for a holiday, with its stunning blend of excellent food and wine, gorgeous scenery, together with an enviable climate and a phenomenal cultural legacy.

The Sorrento peninsula and the Bay of Naples is simply one of the most beautiful corners of Europe, attracting visitors for centuries in search of its outstanding scenery, tranquility and some wonderful historic sites.

Sorrento, the base for this holiday, is delightful and so typical of the south of Italy, with tiny cobbled streets, quaint squares with flowers, tubs of geraniums and winding streets lined with tall, seemingly crumbling buildings, now home to superb shops and cosy restaurants.

The Bay of Naples skyline is dominated by the majestic and still-active Vesuvius, which rises to over 4,000 feet and has erupted in spectacular fashion several times in its history, including the obliteration of Pompeii.

In the cosmopolitan city of Naples the Archeological Museum houses some of the historical treasures excavated from Pompeii and Herculaneum. And of course, Pompeii itself, is astonishingly preserved and visitors are moved by the sheer scale and eerie atmosphere.

The journey around the legendary Amalfi coast, which is said to be Europe's most beautiful, takes in the cliff-clinging resort of Positano, the picturesque village of Amalfi itself and Ravello, where visitors can see amazing views over the coastline.

Capri, an island renowned the world over for its outstanding natural beauty, attracted Roman emperors and many famous people and it is not difficult to see why, especially with the chance to visit the famous Blue Grotto, a large cavern which can only be reached by boat.

Price includes:

- Return flights
- Seven nights half-board accommodation in Sorrento
- Guided tour of Pompeii
- Walking tour of Sorrento
- Cruise to Capri
- Tour of Amalfi coast
- Visits to Vesuvius and Ravello
- Visit to Naples Archaeological Museum
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability – supplement applies

Certain entrance fees payable locally

Berlin

Four days various departure dates

PRICE FROM £419

Berlin has a unique atmosphere created because of its remarkable history and of course this year marks the 25th anniversary of the fall of the infamous Berlin Wall which once divided the city in two.

The capital is one of the most vibrant cities in Europe, with many attractions to explore.

It is possible to see the difference between the old East and West Germany and even now Trabant cars, synonomous with the East, have been renovated and considered trendy.

The guided tour introduces visitors to the old heart of the city including Unter den Linden; the beautiful green area of the Tiergarten; the cathedral and the university, once numbering Albert Einstein amongst its professors; and the new seat of Government, the Reichstag, covered by an immense glass dome designed by Sir Norman Foster.

Then there are the symbols of Berlin, the Brandenburg Gate and what remains of the wall itself. However, the city is not all about war and politics, there are many parks to be explored and of course Germany is home to over 500 breweries with Berlin having its own fair share.

Away from the city the itinerary features a visit to Potsdam and the Sanssouci Park housing the palaces of the most famous Prussian monarch, Frederick the Great, including the well-known Palace of Sanssouci. This delightful palace now rises from the park and crowns a series of ascending terraces affording a panoramic view of the spectacular 740-acre park below.

The holiday includes three nights accommodation at the four-star Movenpick hotel, in the former Siemens factory. It is centrally located near Potsdamer Platz, with easy access to plenty of shops, restaurants, bars and cafes.

Price includes:

- Return flights
- Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- Guided tour of Berlin
- Visit to Potsdam and Sanssouci Park including Rococo Palace
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availabilty – supplement applies

Certain entrance fees payable locally

India and Nepal

15 days various departure dates

PRICE FROM £2,159

This 15-day touring holiday encompasses the very best that Northern India has to offer – from fascinating Delhi and the Taj Mahal to Varanasi, one of the oldest cities in the world. And then, in complete contrast, there's Nepal for the chance to seek out rhinos, bears and tigers, share the peace and tranquility of the Buddhist monks and take a once-in-a-lifetime flight to see Mount Everest.

Tours of New and Old Delhi introduce the major sights. New Delhi is a wonderful city that clearly reflects the legacy of the British Raj. Surprisingly green, it is divided by wide tree-lined avenues with the Presidential Palace at its centre.

While in Old Delhi there's the Red Fort, one of the world's great fortifications with huge walls nearly two miles long. And the city is also home of the Raj Ghat, a memorial to the great Mahatma Gandhi.

For most, the highlight of the trip will be the chance to visit the Taj Mahal, undisputedly one of the world's most stunning buildings. Built from dazzling marble its colour changes from white to yellow, cream and almost to orange. Nearby is the 11th century Agra Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Constructed from red sandstone, the building dominates the surrounding area.

A visit is made to Orchha to discover the 14 cenotaphs with parrots and vultures circling these mystical buildings and the chance to marvel at the palaces of the Orchha Fort complex and admire the fine architecture.

There's also the chance to see some of Khajuraho's remarkable temples, one of the seven wonders of India and another UNESCO World Heritage site. Originally 85 temples were built between the 10th and 12th centuries and today, 22 of these mystical shrines survive.

The tour of India concludes in the city of Varansi, a labyrinth of tangled alleys, shops and workshops and it's from here an exciting rickshaw trip down to the river gives an insight to the pilgrims washing in the holy waters and a boat trip takes in the incredible waterfront to witness the Aarti, an impressive Hindu ceremony.

Nepal is completely different to India, and a visit is made to the famous 14th century Boudhanath Stupa, one of the holiest Buddhist sites. Hear the gentle sound of chanting and praying filling the air.

Kathmandu, capital of Nepal, is one of the world's most naturally beautiful countries, set in a bowl-shaped Himalayan valley 4,500 feet above sea level. This captivating city and Nepal's cultural heart is surrounded by breathtaking snow-capped mountains and from here a flight, weather permitting, gives passengers the chance to photograph Mount Everest from the cockpit of the aircraft.

Take the scenic drive to Chitwan National Park, Nepal's most famous wildlife reserve and one of the finest in Asia. From here visit a local village by ox cart to learn how local people live in a sustainable manner and cross a river on elephant back to observe the animals in their natural habitat and hopefully see the elusive Bengal tiger – a truly unforgettable experience.

Pokhara in central Nepal, is another highlight of the holiday, a charming lakeside town, located in a beautiful area with unbeatable views of the Annapurna mountain range.

Accommoation ranges from a three-star lodge in Chitwan National Park to five-star luxury in Delhi and Kathmandu.

Price includes:

- Return scheduled flights
- 13 nights accommodation in a selection of hotels with daily breakfasts and five meals
- Visits to the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Orchha Fort and some of Khajuraho's temples
- Boat trips on Ganges and lake in Pohkara, rickshaw ride and elephant-back safari
- Tours of Old and New Delhi, Kathmandu and Varanasi
- Early morning trip to see sunrise over the Annapurna mountain range
- Flight to see Mount Everest and the Himalayas (weather permitting)
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability -supplement applies

Certain entrance fees payable locally

For a brochure call the Promotions Team on (01902) 319999 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm) or go to expressandstar.com/starextratravel

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AN excellent and attractive refurbished ground floor flat in Cherry Tree Lane, Codsall, lies in a popular neighbourhood.

There is a wide selection of amenities available nearby at both Birches Bridge and the village centre.

Beautifully presented throughout, and with gas central heating and double glazing, the home is on the market through Bartlams at £99,950.

It has a spacious living room, an impressive kitchen, two double bedrooms, a fully tiled bathroom with smart white suite including a shower and a paved and gravelled garden.

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For further information contact Bartlams on 01902 845215 or visit the www.bartlams.co.uk website.

Home on sale for £260,000

AN extended four-bed detached house with an office/further reception room in Nash Avenue, Wolverhampton lies in a cul-de-sac location on the outskirts of a popular Perton development.

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Having gas central heating and double glazing it has an entrance hallway, WC, a lounge with a fireplace, separate dining room, fitted kitchen, a built-in ceramic hob, double oven, built in refrigerator/freezer, conservatory, office/reception room and utility room. The master has an en suite, and there is a further bathroom/WC.

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EPC: D

Wednesbury
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- Fitted kitchen
- Bathroom with shower
- Generous forecourt parking
- Private garden
- Available January 2015.

£550pcm

EPC: TBC

Wednesbury
Booth Road
- Two bed semi
- Fitted kitchen with appliances
- Double glazed
- Gas centrally heated
- Off road parking
- Rear garden
- Available immediately

£550pcm

EPC: C

Tipton
Factory Road
- Two bed end terraced
- Conservatory
- Fully fitted kitchen
- ORP
- Bathroom with bath and electric shower
- Rear garden

£495pcm

EPC: D

Tipton
Sannders Crescent
- Two bed ground floor
- Fitted kitchen
- Family bathroom
- Off road parking
- Double glazing
- Available immediately

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EPC: C

Tipton
Ferguson Drive
- Two bed first floor apartment
- Popular local development
- Double glazed
- Separate dining kitchen with appliances
- Bathroom with shower

£475pcm

EPC: D

Tipton
Wynn Griffith Drive
- One bedroom semi
- Ideal for young families or working professionals
- GCH and DG
- Fully fitted breakfast kitchen
- Bathroom with shower

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EPC: C

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- One bed apartment
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Farmer Way, Tipton

- Modern Semi Detached
- Upvc Double Glazing + Gas Central Heating
- In Need Of Repair / Attention
- 3 bedrooms, epc C

OFFERS AROUND: £109,950
Viewing:

Cordley Street, West Bromwich

- Middle Terrace
- Gas Central Heating + No Upward Chain
- Spacious Well Presented Accommodation
- 3 bedrooms, epc TBC

OFFERS AROUND: £99,995
Viewing:

Wigginsmill Road, Wednesbury

- Semi Detached Dormer Bungalow
- Double Glazing + Gas Central Heating
- Well Presented Accommodation
- 2 / 3 bedrooms, epc TBC

OFFERS AROUND: £160,000
Viewing:

St. Helens Avenue, Tipton

- Modern Detached Family Home
- Upvc Double Glazing + Gas Central Heating
- Loft Conversion + improved Accommodation
- 5 bedrooms + 2 en suites, epc TBC

OFFERS AROUND: £235,000
Viewing:

Gospel Oak Road, Tipton

- Modern Semi Detached
- Upvc Double Glazing + Gas Central Heating
- Well Presented Accommodation
- 2 bedrooms, epc TBC

OFFERS AROUND: £107,000
Viewing:

Groveland Road, Tipton

- Modern Purpose Built First Floor Apartment
- Upvc Double Glazing + Gas Central Heating
- Security Entrance Doors + No Upward chain
- 2 bedrooms, epc C

OFFERS AROUND: £62,500
Viewing:

Whitegates Road, Bilston

- Modern Detached Family Home
- Upvc Double Glazing + Gas Central Heating
- Superbly Presented Accommodation
- 3 bedrooms + en suite, epc TBC

OFFERS AROUND: £155,000
Viewing:

Heritage Way, Tipton

- Modern Detached
- Upvc Double Glazing + Gas Central Heating
- Garage Conversion
- 4 bedrooms, epc C

OFFERS AROUND: £179,950
Viewing:

Weston Drive, Tipton

- Modern Immaculate Semi Detached
- Upvc Double Glazing + Gas Central Heating
- Sought After Location
- 2 bedrooms, epc D

OFFERS AROUND: £109,950
Viewing:

Lea Avenue, Wednesbury

- Traditional Semi Detached
- Upvc Double Glazing + Gas Central Heating
- No Upward Chain
- 2 bedrooms, epc E

OFFERS AROUND: £110,000
Viewing:

Howard Street, Tipton

- Traditional Extended Semi Detached Bungalow
- Gas Central Heating + Double Glazing
- Improved Superbly Presented Accommodation
- 2 bedrooms + loft room, epc D

OFFERS AROUND: £123,000
Viewing:

Toll End Road, Tipton

- Modern Recently Built 2.5 Storey Family Home
- Upvc Double Glazing + Gas Central Heating
- Immaculate Spacious Accommodation
- 4 bedrooms + en suite, epc B

OFFERS AROUND: £187,500
Viewing:

Hampshire Road, West Bromwich — NEW

- Well Maintained Semi Detached
- Tremendous Potential To Extend (STP)
- Spacious Rear Garden
- Energy Rating E, Easily Converted Back To Three

OFFERS AROUND: £100,000
Viewing:

Bird End, West Bromwich — NEW

- Delightful Detached Bungalow
- Three Double Bedrooms
- En Suite To Master Bedrooms
- Energy Rating C, Double Glazed Conservatory

OFFERS AROUND: £295,000
Viewing:

Denbigh Crescent, West Bromwich — NEW

- First Floor Maisonette
- One Bedroom
- Double Glazed Windows
- , Gas Central Heating (where stated)

OFFERS AROUND: £45,000
Viewing:

Mason Street, West Bromwich — NEW

- Traditional Terrace Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Energy Rating D, Breakfast Kitchen

OFFERS AROUND: £107,950
Viewing:

Church Vale, West Bromwich — REDUCED

- Modern Style Terrace
- Three Bedrooms
- Upstairs Bathroom
- , Parking To Rear

OFFERS AROUND: £99,950
Viewing:

Mountbatten Close, West Bromwich — REDUCED

- Ground Floor Flat
- One Bedroom
- Allocated Parking Space
- , Security Intercom System

OFFERS AROUND: £60,000
Viewing:

Harrington Croft, West Bromwich

- Modern Detached
- Corner Plot Location
- Four Bedrooms
- Energy Rating C, En Suite To Master

OFFERS AROUND: £250,000
Viewing:

Kelverley Grove, West Bromwich

- Semi Detached Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Cul De Sac Location
- Energy Rating TBC, Through Lounge

OFFERS AROUND: £145,000
Viewing:

Tiverton Drive, West Bromwich

- Modern Terrace Property
- Two Bedrooms
- Fully Furnished
- Energy Rating C, Double Glazed Conservatory

OFFERS OVER: £124,000
Viewing:

Blakenall Lane, Walsall — NEW

- Mid Terrace Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- , Downstairs Bathroom

OFFERS AROUND: £64,950
Viewing:

Birch Lane, Walsall — NEW

- Spacious Detached Family Home
- Four Bedrooms & Family Bathroom
- En-suite & Guest WC
- Energy Rating Awaited, Lounge & Dining Room

OFFERS AROUND: £225,000
Viewing:

Radford Close, Walsall

- Modern Style Mid Town House
- Three Bedrooms & Family Bathroom
- Spacious Lounge & Kitchen
- EPC Awaited, Ground Floor Guest WC

OFFERS AROUND: £110,000
Viewing:

Kent Road, Wednesbury — NEW

- A Well Presented 2 Bedroom Semi Detached Home
- No Upward Chain!
- Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing (as spec.)
- EPC Rating: C, Reception Hall

OFFERS AROUND: £110,000
Viewing:

Cornwall Close, Wednesbury

- A 3 Bedroom Semi Detached Home
- Cul-de-Sac Location
- Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing
- EPC Rating: C, Reception Hall

OFFERS AROUND: £110,000
Viewing:

Joynson Street, Wednesbury

- Traditional Semi Detached Property
- Two Double Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- EPC Rating D, Kitchen

OFFERS AROUND: £69,950
Viewing:

Brunswick Park Road, Wednesbury

- Traditional Terrace Property
- Two Bedrooms
- Loft Room
- EPC D, Two Reception Rooms

OFFERS AROUND: £85,000
Viewing:

Goldby Drive, Wednesbury

- Upper Floor Apartment
- Spacious Accomodation
- Two Bedrooms
- EPC Rating - C, Open Plan Lounge & Kitchen

OFFERS AROUND: £74,950
Viewing:

Stonehouse Crescent, Wednesbury

- Semi Detached Property
- Two Bedrooms
- Through Lounge
- Energy Rating D, Kitchen & First Floor Bathroom

OFFERS AROUND: £89,950
Viewing:

Meeting Street, Wednesbury

- A Modern 3 Bedroom Semi Detached Home
- Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing
- Reception Hall
- EPC Rating: D, Fitted Kitchen with Oven & Hob

OFFERS AROUND: £155,000
Viewing:

Kilvert Road, Wednesbury

- A 3 Bed Semi Detached Home
- Gas Central Heating & Partial Double Glazing
- Reception Hall
- EPC Rating: D, Lounge

OFFERS AROUND: £85,000
Viewing:

Simmonds Place, Wednesbury

- Semi Detached
- Three Bedrooms
- Lounge
- EPC Rating D, Ground Floor WC

OFFERS AROUND: £90,000
Viewing:

Dorsett Road Terrace, Wednesbury

- Semi Detached Property
- Three Bedroom & Family Bathroom
- Through Lounge
- Energy Rating D, Spacious Kitchen

OFFERS AROUND: £105,000
Viewing:

Beebee Road, Wednesbury

- Fully Refrubished Semi Detached
- Occupying Corner Plot
- Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing (as specified)

OFFERS AROUND: £150,000
Viewing:

Park Lane, Wednesbury

- An Extended Traditional 3 Bedroom (and a loft room) Detached Home
- No Upward Chain!
- Double Glazing & Central Heating

OFFERS AROUND: £240,000
Viewing:

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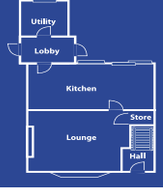

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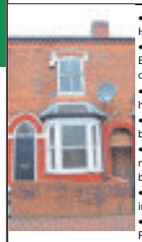
NEW

56 SALISBURY ROAD, SMETHWICK



- Close to Cape Hill
- Easy access to Birmingham city centre
- Gas centrally heated
- Two double bedrooms
- Two reception rooms, kitchen & bathroom
- In need of improvement
- ENERGY RATING : E

OFFERS BASED ON £79,950

Viewings Bearwood Office

NEW

5 SCRIBBANS CLOSE, SMETHWICK

- Three bedroomed maisonette
- Gas centrally heated
- Fully tiled bathroom
- In need of improvement
- ENERGY RATING : F

OFFERS BASED ON £65,000

Viewings Bearwood Office

5 LOUIS COURT, SOUTH ROAD,

- Ground/first floor maisonette
- Part double glazed
- Electric storage heating (where specified)
- Two bedrooms and bathroom
- Hall, lounge and kitchen
- Easy access to Birmingham city centre
- In need of refurbishment
- ENERGY RATING : D

OFFERS BASED ON £52,000

Viewing Bearwood Office

5 PERRY COURT, OLDBURY

- Ground floor warden controlled flat
- Electric storage heating
- Double glazing
- Spacious lounge and kitchen
- Two bedrooms and shower room
- INTERNAL INSPECTION TO BE APPRECIATED
- Designated for over 60s (55+ with a disability)

OFFERS BASED ON £94,950

Viewings Bearwood Office

22 CROCKETTS LANE, SMETHWICK

- Modern three storey town house
- Centrally heated
- Virtually double glazed throughout
- Three bedrooms
- Downstairs cloakroom
- Kitchen/ breakfast room
- Potential for off-street parking
- In need of cosmetic improvement
- ENERGY RATING : D

OFFERS BASED ON £80,000

Viewing Bearwood Office

NEW

1 HEATH GREEN GROVE,

- End terraced property
- Extremely convenient location
- Freehold & Chain Free
- Three bedrooms
- Two living rooms, kitchen, bathroom & small garden
- Centrally heated and double glazed
- IN NEED OF RENOVATION
- ENERGY RATING : E

OFFERS BASED ON £75,000

Viewings Bearwood Office

79 SABELL ROAD, SMETHWICK

- Located close to Smethwick High Street
- Freehold mid-terraced property
- Centrally heated and PVC double glazed
- Two bedrooms and bathroom
- Lounge, Fitted kitchen/Dining room and Utility
- Ideal for first time buyers.
- ENERGY RATING : E

OFFERS BASED ON £97,500

Viewing Bearwood Office

191 CHESHIRE ROAD, SMETHWICK

- Gas central heating
- PVC double glazing
- FOUR bedrooms
- Two reception rooms and study
- An ideal family home

OFFERS BASED ON £126,950

Viewing Bearwood Office

3 REAR OF 31 EVA ROAD, WINSON

- Pedestrian walkway off Eva Road
- Easy access Birmingham city centre
- Centrally heated and PVC double glazed
- Two bedrooms & fully tiled bathroom
- Lounge and kitchen/ breakfast room
- Ideal FTBs
- ENERGY RATING : E

OFFERS BASED ON £74,950

Viewing Bearwood Office

116 POPLAR AVENUE, EDGBASTON

- Deceptively spacious family accommodation
- Gas centrally heated
- Mahogany double glazing
- SIX bedrooms
- Fully tiled bathroom & Downstairs shower room
- Two reception rooms
- Refitted kitchen/ dining room
- Utility/laundry room
- Spacious garden to the rear
- INTERNAL INSPECTION TO BE APPRECIATED
- ENERGY RATING : F

OFFERS BASED ON £249,950

Viewing Bearwood Office

242 PARK ROAD, BEARWOOD

- Substantial and spaciously planned
- Three bedrooms & bathroom to first floor
- Hall, two living rooms and kitchen
- Mostly double glazed & centrally heated
- Excellent day-to-day amenities
- In need of general upgrading

OFFERS BASED ON £149,950

Viewings Bearwood Office

196 MERRIVALE ROAD, BEARWOOD

- Superbly improved terraced villa
- Recently refurbished to high standard
- Two double bedrooms
- Attractive bathroom with bath & individual shower
- Two living rooms and fully refitted kitchen
- Gas centrally heated and double glazed
- Replastered, rewired, new carpets and floor coverings, plus brand new kitchen and bathroom
- INSPECTION ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL
- ENERGY RATING : G

OFFERS BASED ON £134,950

Viewings Bearwood Office

7 WARLEY HALL ROAD : OLDBURY

- Extended semi-detached
- 3 bedrooms
- Good size conservatory
- INTERNAL INSPECTION
- EPC : D

OFFERS BASED ON £189,950

Viewing : Bearwood Office

118 STANHOPE STREET, SMETHWICK

- Corner semi-detached property
- Gas centrally heated & PVC double glazed
- Three bedrooms and bathroom
- Two reception rooms and kitchen
- SIDE ANNEXE having electric storage heating and double glazing, comprising lounge, kitchen, bedroom and shower room
- Potential off-street parking for two/three cars
- An ideal family home
- ENERGY RATING : D

OFFERS BASED ON £150,000

Viewing Bearwood Office

ROTTON PARK ROAD, EDGBASTON

- Spacious family accommodation
- Three bedrooms
- Two reception rooms
- Kitchen/ breakfast room
- Internal inspection to be appreciated
- ENERGY RATING : E

Offers Based On £169,950

Viewing : Bearwood Office

373 TITFORD ROAD, OLDBURY

- First floor flat
- Good motorway links
- Easy access to Birmingham city centre
- PVC double glazed throughout
- Storage heaters throughout
- Two bedrooms & bathroom
- Open plan lounge/kitchen
- Allocated parking
- INTERNAL INSPECTION TO BE APPRECIATED
- ENERGY RATING : B

OFFERS BASED ON £92,500

Viewings Bearwood Office

97 DUFTON ROAD, QUINTON

- Freehold semi-detached corner residence
- Gas centrally heated
- Three bedrooms
- Lounge, kitchen and fully tiled bathroom
- In need of cosmetic improvement
- ENERGY RATING : D

OFFERS BASED ON £90,000

Viewings Bearwood Office

68 FLEMING ROAD, QUINTON

- Gas centrally heated & PVC double glazed
- Three bedrooms and fully tiled bathroom
- Spacious lounge and kitchen/breakfast room
- Easy access to Birmingham city centre
- In need of some cosmetic improvement
- ENERGY RATING : D

OFFERS BASED ON 114,950

Viewings Bearwood Office

185 PARK ROAD, BEARWOOD

- Superbly presented semi-detached property
- Easy reach Warley Woods and Lightwoods Park
- Easy access to Birmingham city centre
- Double glazed and gas centrally heated
- Three bedrooms and fully tiled bathroom
- Inter-communicating lounge/dining room
- Kitchen and utility
- Downstairs cloakroom
- Beautifully presented garden to the rear
- INTERNAL INSPECTION TO BE APPRECIATED
- ENERGY RATING : E

OFFERS BASED ON £229,950

Viewing Bearwood Office

2 BRANDHALL COURT, OLDBURY

- Ground floor 2 bedroomed flat
- PVC double glazed and storage heating
- Spacious lounge
- Communal gardens
- Garage in separate block
- Gated development
- Ideal FTBs
- ENERGY RATING : D

OFFERS BASED ON £79,950

Viewing Bearwood Office

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142 ST. PAULS ROAD, SMETHWICK

- Modern freehold semi-detached residence
- Gas centrally heated & PVC double glazed
- Six bedrooms, master bedroom with en-suite
- Fully tiled family bathroom
- Inter-communicating lounge/dining room
- Downstairs cloakroom
- Side garage and off-street parking
- INTERNAL INSPECTION TO BE APPRECIATED
- ENERGY RATING : C
- STAR BUY

OFFERS BASED ON £215,000

Viewing Bearwood Office

30 ASHBOURNE, EDGBASTON

Derek Spires Estate Agents are now in receipt of an offer for the sum of £82,000 for 30 Ashbourne Road, Edgbaston B16 0JS. Anyone wishing to place an offer on this property should contact Derek Spires Estate Agents, 602 Bearwood Road, Bearwood B66 4BW.

- ENERGY RATING : D

OFFERS BASED ON £85,000

Viewings Bearwood Office

82 DOG KENNEL LANE, OLDBURY

- Recently refurbished semi-detached property
- SUPERBLY PRESENTED WITH INSPECTION A MUST
- Gas centrally heated and PVC double glazed
- Three bedrooms and bathroom
- Two reception rooms
- Kitchen and side extended utility/breakfast room
- Downstairs shower room
- Substantial games room & fully tiled W.C.
- Off-street parking for two cars
- ENERGY RATING : E

OFFERS BASED ON 210,000

Viewings Bearwood Office

13 HIGHFIELD ROAD, SMETHWICK

- Recently refurbished mid-terraced villa
- Close to Smethwick High Street
- Gas centrally heated & PVC double glazed
- Three bedrooms
- Two reception rooms and kitchen
- Fully tiled refitted shower room
- INTERNAL INSPECTION TO BE APPRECIATED

OFFERS BASED ON £99,950

Viewings Bearwood Office

32 BRANDHALL COURT, OLDBURY

- Well presented ground floor flat
- PVC double glazed and well heated
- Gated development
- Superb through lounge/dining room
- Two bedrooms
- Refitted kitchen and bathroom
- Garage and communal gardens
- FULL INTERNAL INSPECTION TO BE APPRECIATED
- ENERGY RATING : E

OFFERS BASED ON £84,950

Viewing: Bearwood Office

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ARLINGTON ROAD, B71 1AA

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- Kitchen/Diner
- Two Reception Rooms
- EPC RATING D, Freehold

£174,950

HILLARY AVENUE, WS10 0HE

- A Semi Detached Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Front And Rear Gardens
- Lounge
- Off Road Parking
- EPC RATING D, Freehold

£124,950

GRAFTON ROAD, B71 4EG

- A Semi Detached Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Central Heating
- Double Glazed
- EPC RATING D, Freehold

Offers in Excess of £139,999

ROBERTS ROAD, WS10 0LG

- A Semi Detached Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Double Glazing & Central Heating
- Conservatory
- EPC RATING E, Freehold

£129,950

SHERIDAN STREET, B71 4EF

- A Mid Terrace Property
- Two/Three Bedroomed
- Two Reception Rooms
- Downstairs Shower Room
- EPC RATING F, Freehold

£99,950

WHITTINGTON CLOSE, B71 3EX

- A Terraced Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Central Heating & Double Glazed
- Vacant Possession And Freehold
- EPC RATING C

99,000

CARISBROOKE ROAD, WS10 0HZ

- A Terraced Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Large Conservatory
- Central Heating, Double Glazed
- EPC RATING D, Freehold

£109,950

VICARAGE ROAD, B71 1AE

- A Mid Terraced Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Central Heating
- Downstairs W.C
- EPC RATING C, Freehold

£127,000

HYDES ROAD, WS10 9SX

- A Three Storey Terraced Property
- Four Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Loft Conversion
- EPC RATING D, Freehold

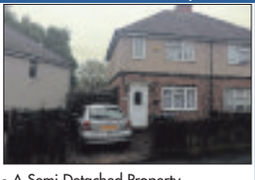
£139,950

WHITEGREAVE STREET, B70 9BB

- A Semi Detached Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Double Glazing & Central Heating
- Off Road Parking & Rear Garden
- EPC RATING F

£114,950

RICHARD WILLIAMS ROAD, WS10



- A Semi Detached Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Central Heating And Double Glazed
- Freehold
- EPC RATING D

£109,950

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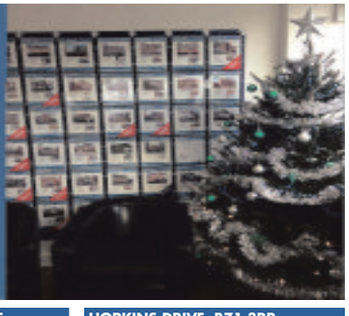

DAWES AVENUE, B70 7LS

- An End Terraced Property
- Two Bedrooms
- Central Heating & Double Glazed
- Front & Rear Gardens
- EPC RATING C, Freehold

£109,950

BASSETT ROAD, WS10 0HH

- A Mid Terraced Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Majority Double Glazing
- Central Heating
- EPC RATING D, Freehold

£94,950

ST. MICHAELS COURT, B70 8ET

- A Modern First Floor Apartment
- Two Bedrooms
- Central Heating
- Excellent Location For Town Centre
- EPC Rating C, Leasehold

£105,000

CRANKHALL LANE, WS10 0DY

- An End Terraced Property
- Two Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Central Heating
- EPC RATING E

£99,950

POMMEL CLOSE, WS5 4QE

- A Ground Floor Flat
- Two Bedrooms
- Central Heating, Double Glazed
- Conservatory
- EPC RATING C, Leasehold

£79,950

HOPKINS DRIVE, B71 3RR

- A Detached Bungalow
- Three Bedrooms
- Central Heating
- Majority Double Glazed
- EPC RATING D, Freehold

£221,950

CHARLEMONT ROAD, B71 3HU

- A Detached Property
- Three Bedrooms
- Lounge & Dining Room
- Conservatory
- EPC RATING B, Freehold

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Street cred in EcoSport

Sales of small SUVs – cars that look like rugged little off-roaders, but aren't – are expected to nearly double in the next five years. So every car maker with an eye to future growth needs one, and fast.

Say hello to the Ford EcoSport. Designed in Brazil and built in India, it's really a Fiesta underneath the tall and mildly macho new bodywork. That promises a great deal, once you push the engine start button. We'll see.

Before we get there, let's wander round the outside of the EcoSport, perhaps wondering if it will prove either Eco or Sport and noticing the large radiator grille at the front and, rare on a car today, a spare wheel mounted on the back door and hidden beneath a body coloured cover.

Moving it out of the interior frees up room for a decent boot (bigger than most competitors) but does mean the door must be side-hinged, so you have to leave lots of room behind at the supermarket car park or you'll never load the shopping.

The door must weigh a lot too, although Ford cleverly fits a telescopic strut that will actually open it all the way itself after a gentle start from the EcoSport owner.

Now open the driver's door (via a little rubber button, car key firmly left in pocket or handbag) and slide aboard. You'll notice a nicely elevated driving position, one of the reasons people love an SUV, along with the sense of occasion bestowed by mere ownership. More upmarket, somehow, than a mere hatch, don't you think?

If you've jumped into an EcoSport from a current Fiesta (and Ford must hope lots do) you'll spot pretty much the same dashboard ahead of you, with its array of mobile phone-like buttons and tiny screen for lesser tasks like radio and phonebook displays.

Then you'll notice that there's a general lack of feel good soft surfaces, replaced by lots of hard plastic that does nothing to make the EcoSport feel even modestly upmarket.

Just as well, then, that the car comes pretty well equipped for the money. There are only two trim levels, the Titanium as tested here and, for £1,000 more, the Titanium X which adds full leather trim, bigger alloy wheels, cruise control and auto functions for lights, wipers and dimming rear view mirror.

Standard on the lower spec EcoSport are 16ins alloys, electric windows all round, trip computer, keyless entry and automatic air conditioning. Bluetooth (surely a modern day must have) is another £250 and you'll need rear parking sensors (remember that spare wheel slung out the back) for £210 too.

Three engines are offered; the 1.0 three-cylinder petrol unit tested today, a 1.5 litre petrol with the option of automatic gears and a 1.5 litre diesel. Prices top out at £17,495 and every car is front-wheel drive; no 4x4 is offered.

What is on offer is plenty of room for driver and four passengers (five at a pinch) with lots of headroom front and rear and even a back seat that can be reclined a little for a more relaxing journey.

You'll be most relaxed if the road ahead is smooth. The EcoSport feels tough as can be but it never really settles down on a typically pock-marked British road surface. Not awful, but not a patch on the Fiesta that spawned it. Doesn't feel like a Fiesta in bends either, but does its best to overcome the inevitable rock and roll that building a car tall brings with it. Not Sport-like, it must be said.

The car fares better in the first part of its name, with a reasonably Eco 43mpg recorded in a week's typical use.

The little 1.0 litre engine is a gem in the Fiesta and does a decent job in the heavier EcoSport too, accompanied by a lovely background burble.

And it helps give Ford a bit of street cred in a part of the car market where everyone wants a piece of the action.

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VAUXHALL

Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km). Lowest: Vauxhall Corsa 3 Door Hatchback 1.2i 85PS 16v Excite A/C with 14", 15" and 16" wheels, M5: Urban: 39.2 (7.2), Extra-urban: 62.8 (4.5), Combined: 51.4 (5.5). CO_2 emissions: 129g/km. Highest: Vauxhall Corsa 3 dr Hatchback 1.6i 16V 192PS VXR Turbo (A/C) with 17" wheels, M6: Urban: 28.8 (9.8), Extra-urban: 47.9 (5.9), Combined: 38.7 (7.3). CO_2 emissions: 172g/km

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Once more with feeling for Antara

By David Banner

Tell most people you drive a Vauxhall Antara and you'll be greeted with blank looks. But what Vauxhall's 4x4 lacks in brand recognition it makes up for in raw ability. Sized midway between a compact and a family 4x4, it offers strong value for money, a fine engine and solid build quality.

First shown at the 2006 Paris Show, it was effectively a rebadged Chevrolet Captiva, itself a rebadged Daewoo Winstorm. This third-hand model may not have been thoroughly imbued with Vauxhall DNA, coming as it did straight out of not Luton but GM-Daewoo's Bupyeong-gu plant in Incheon, Korea. Perhaps this explains Vauxhall's rather half-hearted marketing effort. Certainly the Chevrolet Captiva seems to have sold more units in the UK.

All this back story merely serves to explain why such a decent car has been so criminally undersold. Make no mistake, the Antara is no spiritual successor to the awful Frontera, yet could only muster a fraction of the Frontera's sales at a time when the SUV market was booming. Fast forward to today and we have a more sluggish sales arena that Vauxhall is attempting to inject a little life into with its facelifted and improved Antara. Maybe the second time's a charm.

The Achilles heel of the old Antara was a rather asthmatic and coarse 2.0-litre diesel engine. Thankfully that has been yanked and junked in favour of a wholly more satisfactory 2.2-litre lump. Power goes up from 148bhp to a more robust 162bhp in the entry-level model or 183bhp for the range-topping all-wheel drive car which means that you won't need to extend it quite so much when fully loaded.

As well as better performance, this fully Euro-5 compliant engine line-up offers significantly reduced fuel consumption and emissions. Both engine variants come with variable camshaft phasing, optimising torque and performance as well as reducing fuel consumption and emissions. The Antara was never a star performer off road and neither is the latest car. The chassis gets revised spring and damper settings which help the on-road ability significantly but ground clearance remains an issue if you're to subject the vehicle to anything much more arduous than a rutted track. The adaptive four-wheel drive system switches automatically between two and four-wheel drive as conditions demand. In normal driving, only the front wheels are driven, saving fuel, but in slippery conditions four-wheel drive is employed, switching drive to both front and rear wheels for improved traction.

The biggest styling change to the latest Antara is its revised grille. I'm not altogether sold on the way that it makes the car look narrower and taller than before but the rear end now looks extremely sharp, with a central crease running vertically up the middle and chunky light clusters defining the Vauxhall's hips. These big lights have the unfortunate effect of narrowing the loading aperture at the back, but what price good looks? Underbody bash plates at the front and rear of the car appear to be more cosmetic than anything else.

Reliability

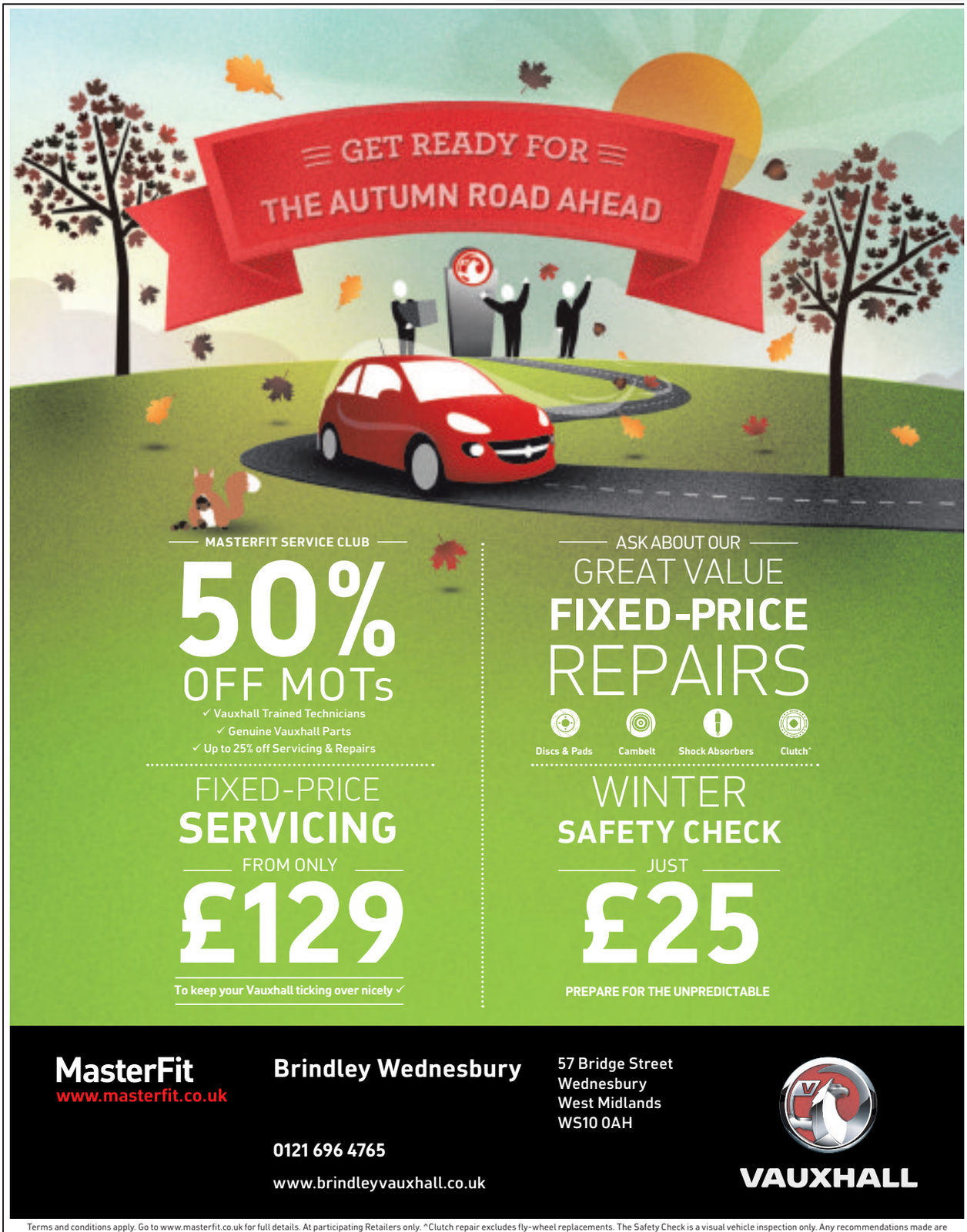
A five-seater, the Antara features seats that fold flat to the floor and room for a decent amount of luggage when the rear seats are in place. The interior is, rather unsurprisingly, not particularly Vauxhall in its design language but gets a revised centre console with extra storage and better quality materials, in addition to improved instrument graphics and interior lighting. Build quality is solid enough and owners of first generation Antara models have reported decent satisfaction scores in reliability surveys.

The 162bhp Antara variant is offered in front-wheel drive with a six-speed manual transmission only or there's all-wheel drive mated to either a manual or six-speed auto gearbox. The 184bhp model also offers a choice of manual or automatic transmissions, and comes with all-wheel drive as standard. All transmissions have been revised to improve efficiency.

Equipment levels are decent, even for the entry-level Exclusiv model, while the SE variant can be identified by its 19-inch alloy wheels and chrome bezels on the front foglights. With prices starting at less than £20,000, the Antara represents a heck of a lot of metal for your money.

The latest Vauxhall Antara hasn't actually changed the formula that much from its rather unsuccessful predecessor. That in itself might sound a damning appraisal were it not for the fact that the old Antara wasn't at all bad, merely underrated and under-promoted. This latest model offers a lot more power as well as improved efficiency and lower prices, so it has tightened up in all the key areas that count.

Better equipment provision and revised styling may also prove attractive to potential customers but in order to get bums on seats, Vauxhall needs to not only let people know that this vehicle exists, but it must also be able to do that while convincing them not to choose its sister vehicle, the Chevrolet Captiva. With the improvements already in hand, the latter task may be easier than the former. Offering a lot of car for not a lot of money is always a good start but the Antara features quality as well as quantity. It's not a macho off-roader but if you need space for a family of five with all-weather capability, the big-hearted Vauxhall takes a lot of beating – at this price at any rate.



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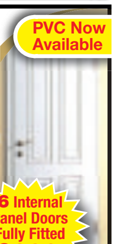

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CITROEN C2 1.4 Furio, 3 door, automatic, black, 04 reg, 105,000 miles, 11 months MoT. Stunning little car. £1,600. 07948 717055.

FORD FIESTA 1.4 Ghia, 05 reg, 8 months MoT, silver, very low miles 41k, immaculate leather interior, £2,250. Call 07713 905250.

MERCEDES E430, 1999, silver, 74,000 genuine miles, 12 months MoT, fsh, lovely condition, £1,800. Telephone 07970 992872.

SUZUKI ALTO 1.1 GL, 2005 55reg, 5dr, £30 Road tax, 26k miles, MOT to 07/15, **£1495 07971 226968**

RENAULT MODUS 2005, 29,858 miles, silver, fsh, MoT Nov 2015, 1 lady owner last 9 years. Immaculate condition inside and out, a brilliant car - model of comfort and reliability. £2,395 **01543 574320**

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ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

FIAT PUNTO SPORTING 1.2, 3 door, 2002, silver, 57k, s/h, 2 former keepers, 12 months MoT, as new, £895. 07984 141652.

FORD FIESTA 1.25, 02 reg, MoT Feb 15, 93,842 miles, silver, good runner, body needs slight attention. £350. 07405 215217.

FORD KA 2003, 56,000miles, 1 year MoT, cd player power steering.Lovely condition. Ladyowner, £650. 07570 466 779.

FORD MONDEO 2004, 2.0 Ghia, petrol, MoT July 15, good condition. £850. 01902 850755.

NISSAN ALMERA SVE, 1500cc, AC, Sat Nav, new exhaust, sun roof, good runner, £1,500 ono. 01543 491989. 07851 774277.

NISSAN PRIMERA SE 2002, 80,000 miles, black, electric windows, air bag, air con, alarm, long MoT, central locking, pas, alloys, stereo, CD, rear parking camera. **£1,000. 07582 369719.**

PEUGEOT 206 CC, 2004, 84,000 miles, MoT, 2.0 litre, silver, £795 ono. 07568 344410.

RENAULT CLIO, 2001, Sport 1149cc, air con, alarm, MoT, metallic paint, central locking, pas, sunroof, £550 ono. 07936 353318.

RENAULT MEGANE SCENIC 2004, 22k on clock, green, abs, e/w, a/c, alarm, MoT, metallic paint, pas, diesel, alloys, CD, sunroof. **£1,250. 01902 411318.**

ROVER 214, 1995, long MoT, lovely car in and out, no known faults, £480. 07434 481812.

ROVER METRO Knightsbridge, 3Dr and 5Dr, mechanically good, needs rear wheel arches for MoT, £185 each. 07980 003884 Walsall.

TOYOTA YARIS Verso, 01, 46,500 miles, met dark red, 11 months MoT, very good condition. £1,125. 01922 479590/ 07957 742129.

VAUXHALL VECTRA 2.0 DTi, 53, alloys, full service history, excellent condition, £1,295. 01543 579587 or 07974 256690.

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9 Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to **Marie Hogg on 01902 713146 or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk** (remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

GEORGE LESLIE ANDREWS (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 16 Broadfield Close West Bromwich West Midlands B71 3EU, who died on 28/07/2014 are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned on or before 20/02/2015, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
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public & legal notices

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Speed Humps/Tables Consultation

The council proposes to construct speed tables to reduce the speed of vehicles on these roads:

Location: Area (m²); Height (mm)

Junction of Mackmillan Road and Limes Avenue, Rowley Regis: 216.92; 75

Junction of Alma Street and Oxford Street, Wednesbury: 256.86; 75

Full details may be examined at: Area Director Regeneration & Economy, Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, B69 3DE during normal office hours and at www.sandwell.gov.uk

Objections in writing to Mr Irfan Choudry, at above address or email to highways@sandwell.gov.uk by 08/01/2015.

Section 26(1)(bb) of the Marriage Act 1949
Section 6(3A)(a) of the Civil Partnership Act 2004

The Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF PREMISES

THE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF SANDWELL

being the authority for the purposes of the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005, **HEREBY GIVE NOTICE** that an application has been made by **Mr M Satchwell** being the proprietor of premises situated and known as **Sandwell Register Office, Highfields, High Street, West Bromwich, B70 8RJ** for the approval of those premises for the solemnisation of marriages in pursuance of Section 26(1)(bb) of the Marriage Act 1949 and the registration of Civil Partnerships in pursuance of Section 6(3A) (a) of The Civil Partnerships Act 2004.

The application, together with a plan of the premises which accompanied it, may be inspected at

Sandwell Council House, Oldbury, West Midlands

Between the hours of 9.00 am and 5.00pm, and at

Sandwell Register Office, Highfields, High Street, West Bromwich, West Midlands, between the hours of 9.30am and 4.30 pm (Monday to Friday).

Any person may give notice in writing of an objection to the grant of approval of such application, with reasons for the objection, within 21 days from the date of publication of the newspaper in which this notice appears.

Such notice of objection should be given to the Authority to: Neeraj Sharma, Director of Legal and Governance Services, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury, West Midlands B69 3DE (Ref: NS/AHR).

Dated 11 December 2014

J Britton, Chief Executive

On behalf of the Authority

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Regeneration and Economy
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010

I hereby give notice that Sandwell Council has received the following applications under the planning acts which it is required to give public notice for the reason given at the beginning of each group of applications.

This is a major application.

DC/14/57687	Mr Mark Page Midland Quarry Products	Land Adjacent Midland Quarry Products Smith Road Wednesbury	Proposed importation and storage of road planings for crushing and screening prior to use in aggregate and asphalt production on the adjoining asphalt plant site.

This is a major application.

DC/14/57674	Mr Mark Horsley Mar City Homes Limited	Land Off Mill Street Tipton	Proposed variation of condition 1 of planning approval (DC/12/55137) to substitute house types (all plots).

This is a major application.
The Council are of the opinion that the proposal may affect the setting of a listed building.

DC/14/57725	Gr8 Space Limited	Red House Hill Lane Great Barr Birmingham B43 6LZ	Proposed demolition of a flat roof single storey section and re-development of former office building to form 8 No. residential properties, and new building to form a terrace of 6 No. houses, including access, car parking and landscaping.

The Council are of the opinion that the proposal may affect the setting of a listed building.

DC/14/57711	Gr8 Space Limited	Red House Hill Lane Great Barr Birmingham B43 6LZ	Proposed demolition of a flat roof single storey section and re-development of former office building to form 8 No. residential properties, and new building to form a terrace of 6 No. houses, including access, car parking and landscaping.

This is a major application.

DC/14/57707	Diocesan Education Service	Land Adjacent 316 Moat Road Oldbury	New two form entry Catholic primary school, with associated parking, boundary fencing, and new vehicular access from Moat Road.

Members of the public may inspect copies of these applications at Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE

(between 8.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Wednesday and 8.00a.m. to 5p.m. Friday) or via the Council's Public Access website (www.sandwell.gov.uk).

Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications can do so via the website, or should write to the Council at the above address within 21 days (and 21 days for Listed Building or Conservation Area consent) of the date of this advertisement quoting the application reference number.

Mr Nick Bubalo, Area Director – Regeneration and Economy

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTENTION NOT TO PREPARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT (Regulation 5 of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Land Drainage Improvement Works) Regulations 1999 as amended by SI 2005/1399 and SI 2006/618

RECONNECTING WOODGATE VALLEY

The Environment Agency gives notice that it proposes to carry out improvement works to the flood defences on the Bourn Brook in Woodgate Valley between Hole Farm Weir (NGR SO 99849 83439) and Quarry Weir (NGR SP 00615 83448, a distance of 0.7 kilometres. The proposed improvement works will involve the following:

By-pass of Hole Farm weir and modification of the 4 remaining small concrete weirs along the Bourn Brook between the points given above in order to help improve the habitat and ecology of the brook.

The Environment Agency considers that the improvement works are not likely to have significant effects on the environment and does not intend to prepare an environmental statement in respect of them. Further information on the works and a copy of the environmental assessment can be obtained by contacting the Fradley Environment Agency Office (address below).

Any person wishing to make representations in relation to the likely environmental effects of the proposed improvement works should do so, in writing, to the address specified below, within 28 days of the date of publication of this notice.

Alex McDonald
Reconnecting Woodgate Valley Project Manager
Sentinel House, 9 Wellington Crescent, Fradley Park, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS13 8RR

10 Personals

personal

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general

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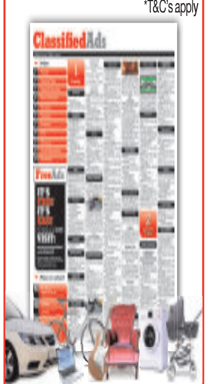

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Khalsa staying on league leader's tail

Sporting Khalsa 3 Gornal Athletic 0

Football

SPORTING Khalsa kept in touch with leaders Bridgnorth, securing a ninth consecutive league victory with a comprehensive 3-0 win over third-placed Gornal.

Ian Rowe's side dominated from start to finish with the visitors rarely putting pressure on the home team's goal.

Ex-Gornal man Marvin Nisbett opened the scoring on 11 minutes, reacting well to some slapdash defending to prod home the first of three goals which gave Khalsa the match.

Nicky Campbell should have doubled the lead on 23 minutes, finding himself one on one with the goalkeeper only for Rich Kennedy to pull off the first of a series of excellent saves.

Just seconds later, however, Mensah Kinch was brought down in the area by Carl Martin and Tim Jackson lashed home the spot-kick.

Kennedy produced the save of the match on 41 minutes to deny Craig Bannister, diving to tip over a rocket of a shot that was destined for the roof of the net.

The second half saw Bannister again in the thick of the action and, once again, frustrated by the efforts of Kennedy.

First, within a minute of the restart, Kennedy blocked a shot as Bannister surged through and the striker was unable to convert the loose ball.

And two minutes later excellent work by Campbell down the right saw a curling, tempting ball put into the danger zone, somehow evading Bannister's lunging effort to connect. Kennedy produced another brilliant save on 83 minutes, diving to the near post to put the block on a goal-bound drive by Mike Perks.

But deep into stoppage time a loose throw in by Gornal's Carl Martin was miscontrolled by Steve Edmonds, enabling Randy Davis to whip in a brilliant cross to find the head of fellow substitute Chris Rabone to head home.

The goal gave a more honest reflection of the balance of the match and means Khalsa remain one point behind Bridgnorth with four games in hand.

Ideye is pushing for third starter

ALBION boss Alan Irvine says record signing Brown Ideye is edging closer to a third Premier League start after a frustrating first five months at The Hawthorns.

Ideye has started just twice in the league and is yet to find the net with reports from the training ground suggesting the £10m striker had struggled to make an impact. But Irvine says the Nigeria international has made encouraging strides in recent sessions.

"He's actually trained the best he has trained in the last couple of weeks," said Irvine. 'That's not in terms of his application, which has always been good, but in terms of his effectiveness.

"So he's certainly looking more like what we would hope he would look. He has scored goals in training.

"There was a time when he was struggling to do that. And I think he is feeling a lot better about himself."

Ideye hit form on Tuesday in a 5-2 win over Northampton in a closed friendly.

The striker bagged two goals . Irvine hinted Brown was a contender to start at the KC Stadium on Saturday before Victor Anichebe was passed fit.

Blues don't like to be beside the seaside

Blackpool 1 Birmingham 0

LEE Clark could not contain his delight after Blackpool claimed only their second win of the season.

Football

The 1-0 victory over his former side Birmingham was also the first of his tenure. Steven Davies scored the only goal in the second half to give bottom-of-the-table Blackpool all three points and lift them to within eight points of safety in the Championship.

The defeat is Birmingham's first in their last six games and their first since Gary Rowett took charge, while the Seasiders are now unbeaten in three games.

And Clark was over the moon with a result the former Blues boss hopes can kick-start his side's push for safety.

"I thought my team stuck to the gameplan terrifically well. They worked extremely hard against a team that's probably top three in the form table," he said.

"Since Gary has got in there they've been on a terrific run and you know they are a good team.

"We knew we had to be at our very best today to get a result and in the second half especially we've created more chances so we're delighted with that, we're delighted with the clean sheet."

"The feeling is the best feeling in the world in team sport at five o'clock on a Saturday – you cannot beat it with anything."

Meanwhile, for Rowett and Blues, the defeat ends what had been a fine unbeaten run to start his reign and the former Burton boss admitted his players might have been too keen to prove a point to their former manager.

"We never got going," he said. "You felt it was one of those games. You knew it was going to be scrappy.

"I don't think the pitch helped us play the way we wanted to play but you've got to manage that.

"We spoke about it early in the game that they'd put the pressure on.

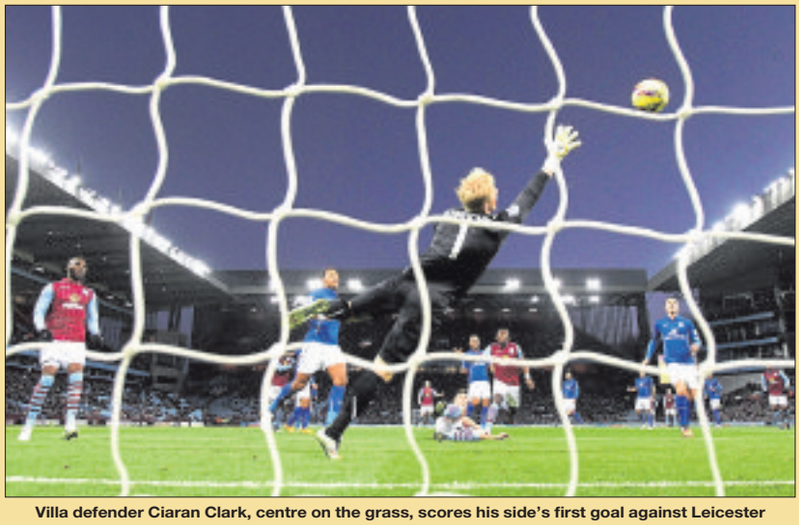
"I'm disappointed for the players because obviously they've set those levels but I'm disappointed that they didn't quite get to those.

"There's a lot of them playing against their old manager and I think some of them in terms of nervous energy expended a lot in getting up for the game and I don't think that helped them.

"Sometimes when you want to put your best performance in occasionally it takes energy away from you.

"Even not at our best I thought it would be a 0-0 game, maybe decided by a mistake and unfortunately I think the mistake was ours."

Hutton hurls in the winning goal for Villa



Villa defender Ciaran Clark, centre on the grass, scores his side's first goal against Leicester

Villa 2 Leicester 1

ALAN Hutton bagged his first Aston Villa goal as they clinched a feisty 2-1 win over 10-man Leicester.

The right-back, who had been frozen out by manager Paul Lambert before this season, netted with 20 minutes left to cap their comeback.

Leonardo Ulloa ended his drought with his first goal in 10 games to put the Foxes ahead but Ciaran Clark equalised within minutes.

And Paul Konchesky was sent off late on for Leicester after clashing with Hutton – who was lucky to stay on – to compound the visitors' woes. It left Nigel Pearson's side rooted to the bottom of the Barclays Premier League and lifted resurgent Villa up to 11th.

Charles N'Zogbia and Carlos Sanchez were recalled for the hosts, replacing the suspended Andi Weimann and injured Joe Cole.

Danny Simpson made his first Leicester start since signing from QPR in the summer.

The defender had played just 26 minutes for the Foxes this season and replaced the ill Ritchie de Laet.

The visitors took the lead on 13 minutes when Villa failed to shackle Riyad Mahrez and Brad Guzan spilled his deflected effort straight to Ulloa who tapped in. It was a gift but Villa levelled five minutes later.

WSU are looking like the favourites

W.S.U cemented their status as Pulse Wednesbury Sunday night eight-a-side league title favourites with a defeat of championship rivals Yetihad FC.

Both teams came into the game full of confidence having won their opening three matches in convincing fashion, and although it's still early days, it looks like it's going to be a two horse race at the summit.

W.S.U came into the game as slight underdogs despite their perfect start, facing opponents who had notched an astonishing 16 goals so far, conceding just one, while the W.S.U games have been much tighter affairs. They came up with their best display of the campaign here though to keep Yetihad's potent attacking force relatively quiet while becoming a major threat on the break.

And they eventually ran out as comfortable winners to claim a significant victory, but with half of the season still to go the title race remains wide open.

Allstars moved up to third in the ladder as they beat G.B.U 1-0. In a match where both teams attacking players were nullified, it was Allstars that nicked the all-important goal.

Wolves get Fulham in Cup draw

WOLVES have been handed a trip to Craven Cottage in the third round of the FA Cup with Albion given a plum tie with non-league side Gateshead.

Kenny Jackett's men have happy memories of playing Fulham this season, after Bakary Sako bagged the winner as Wolves claimed the Championship points with a 1-0 victory.

Under-pressure Baggies boss Alan Irvine will welcome a run in the famous old competition and his side have been given a huge chance of making it through to round four after being paired with the north-east outfit. Villa are at home againstBlackpool.

Games will be played between January 3-6.

Morgan is facing an FA charge

WOLVES chairman Steve Morgan is facing an FA fine if he is found guilty of insulting referee Mike Jones.

The Molineux chief remonstrated with Jones following a series of controversial decisions in the 2-1 defeat to Bournemouth on Saturday.

Football's governing body alleges 'his language and/or behaviour after the end of the fixture was abusive and/or insulting and/or improper'.

Jones had to be escorted off the pitch at the end of the game with a furious Morgan venting his frustration at the official.Wolves are – indirectly– involved in another FA charge with Georg Margreitter in the middle of a potential error.

Sports Desk 01902 319531 email: Chronsport@expressandstar.co.uk

Going up looking likely for Harriers

Birmingham and District Cross Country League

PROMOTION to Division 2 is a distinct possibility for West Bromwich Harriers. With two races to go WBH have a lead of 137 points from their nearest rivals Massey Ferguson, after increasing their lead by a furthur 83 points.

The first three clubs now stand at WBH 188 points, MF 325 and Black Pear Joggers 333 points.

The club had its first ever league winner in James Jefferson in a time of 33.42, from second -placed Andrew Blakunus of Sphinx AC by 24 seconds, a gap of some 150 metres, over the 10k course at Walsall Airport, hosted by Aldridge Running Club.

James was very ably supported by Richard Powell sixth in 35.44, Girmal Dehl seventh in 36.19, Gary Whitehouse 12th in 37.03, new boy, Adam Hancocks 20th in 37.35, with Lee Harris making up the team 36th in 38.33.

Others who finished were, Matt Whitehouse 37th, Dave Jones 82nd, Paul Stevens 111th, Andrew Moseley 120th, Andy White 141st, Clark Woodhall 142nd, Dave Bratby 150th, and Jim Jones 167th.

The next race is at Droitwich in January 2015.

Joel strikes like lightning

Wellington Amateurs 0
Dudley Town 5

DUDLEY Town ran riot away at Wellington Amateurs with Joel Ambalu scoring the Robins' fastest ever league goal in eight seconds.

They racked up the away win to leapfrog their hosts into 15th place in the West Midlands Premier Division.

Ambalu opened the scoring in dramatic fashion after Wellington defender Nathan Taylor's intended back pass to keeper Scot Hoof fell short.

The striker doubled Town's lead on 27 minutes with Lee Smith adding a third 10 minutes later.

A superb close range volley from Rhys Morgan on 63 minutes ended any hopes the Shropshire side had of a comeback.

Andy Arnold celebrated the Robins' fifth nine minutes later.

Tividale squander two goal lead to share spoils

M Drayton 2 Tividale 2

Football

TIVIDALE ended a run of four straight league Evo-Stik Division One South defeats but squandered a two-goal lead at Market Drayton.

Despite plenty of Tividale possession and looking threatening, the first chance on 10 minutes fell to Market Drayton as Aiden Haughton fired wide and six minutes later it was Michael O'Reilly's turn to shoot wide.

Tividale's first clear chance came when a Deqwon Ebanks effort was saved by Drayton keeper Daniel Read. Tividale went agonisingly close on 30 minutes when a Ebanks header from a Zac Foster cross came back off the crossbar.

Then Drayton's early substitute Joe Donaldson struck the bar with the goal at his mercy. Tividale had another great chance to take the lead when a Chris Fields shot was deflected over the line by Karl Edwards but it was ruled offside.

The visitors opened the scoring on 37 minutes when Edwards pounced on a Danny Ashton cross into the near post and gave Read no chance. On the stroke of half-time they should have extended their lead when David Bellis ran straight through the Drayton back line only to have his shot brilliantly blocked by Read. The ball fell nicely to Ashton with an open goal in front of him and he took a touch but then shot wide of the post.

Drayton had the second half's first effort on goal when a Cohen Bramall free-kick was parried by Price but William Whieldon failed to control the rebound and he blazed over. On 57 minutes a Foster free-kick was met by the head of Edwards but again Read saved well. Tividale doubled their lead on the hour when Ebanks got his reward for his hard work up front when he latched onto a poor Drayton clearance and beat Read with his shot.

Six minutes later Drayton halved the deficit when a Tividale error let in Jordan Johnson and he made no mistake when left one on one with Price.

Tividale were struggling to keep the ball out of their own half and on 76 minutes came the inevitable. Tividale failed to clear and James Askey headed home.

ALBION IN HULL OF A DULL GAME

Hull City 0 Albion 0

HULL'S resident music man must have been taking the mickey.

As soon as the final whistle blew, the sound of Swedish DJ Avicii and American soul singer Aloe Blacc blasted out around the KC Stadium. And the lyrics, "wake me up when it's all over" captured the mood of Albion fans .

Football

Had Baggies supporters taken a nap during the afternoon's 'Premier entertainment', they would have woken to some hard-earned positives for head coach Alan Irvine and his beleaguered Albion team, not that they were ready to acknowledge it in the wake of another miserable afternoon.

But they would have missed precisely nothing in terms of thrills and spills on another afternoon of turgid football.

Successful

It is becoming a familiar tale for Albion in this latest troubled season, which even in its more successful moments has become a major trial to watch.

So even when there are redeeming features, as there undoubtedly were from this freezing afternoon on the Humber Estuary, the sense of gloom persists.

There were few Baggies fans with a good word to say about their team on Saturday evening and, given the blows they have suffered over the last two years, it is tough to criticise their downbeat response.

But Irvine was largely happy with his afternoon's work and, bearing in mind the pressure he is facing for his job at present, his response was equally understandable.

His decision to recall Gareth McAuley to the heart of defence was rewarded with a towering display from the veteran alongside Joleon Lescott and a much-needed clean sheet after several weeks of poor goals being shipped at an alarming rate.

His team defended better as a unit and enjoyed slicker, more confident possession than they had managed of late.

And, most importantly of all, they collected a very useful point at the home of one of their fellow strugglers and stopped the rot after a sequence of four successive defeats that had left Irvine's position under massive scrutiny at The Hawthorns.

But he is still in trouble, as more jibes from his own supporters proved during the second half of a dismal spectacle in which both bosses – Irvine and Steve Bruce – seemed reluctant to roll the attacking dice for fear of throwing away the point that kept their scoreboard ticking.

Graham Dorrans misses a golden chance to give Albion an early lead from the penalty spot when his effort was saved

Greaves heads to Heathens

CRADLEY fans' favourite Nathan Greaves has agreed a deal which will see him back at the club for a third successive season in 2015.

Greaves was unveiled as the club's second signing for their move to Perry Barr in front of a packed audience at the Heathens Children's Club Christmas Party at Cradley Heath Liberal Club.

And his appearance in front of the youngsters went down well after he made the journey from his South Yorkshire base to meet fans.

Greaves is already preparing for the 2015 campaign and says he is "over the moon" to be back with the Heathens for a shot at a hat-trick of league titles.

He said: "I would never really want to leave Cradley – who would? I want a third straight league title!

"They're a massive club with great fans and they're definitely the best team in the National League so I'm delighted .

"Last season I know I improved my average and I know I've come on a heck of a lot since first signing for the club, but I want to make sure that I improve even further in 2015. I want to push myself."

Dudley stung in second half

Bustleholme 2
Team Dudley 1

BUSTLEHOLME won this West Midlands Division One match up.

Reece Bancroft tapped in Dudley's opener.

But in the second half the Bs equalised with a far-post tap-in and a 74th-minute headed goal claimed the points.

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